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LADY MACLAIRN,

THE

VICTIM OF VILLANY.

A NOVEL.



IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY MRS. HUNTER,

OF NORWICH,

AUTHOR OF LETITIA; THE UNEXPECTED LEGACY; THE HISTORY OF
THE GRUETHORPE FAMILY; PALMERSTONE'S LETTERS, &c. &c.

VOL. I.

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INTRODUCTION.

IN presenting the following pages to the Public, I conceive it to be incumbent on me to say, that Miss Cowley's letters to her friend will be found to contain nearly the whole of a narrative, from which, I trust, my readers may draw a lesson of morality, as well as of gratification to that curiosity which a *new Novel* often excites, but sometimes disappoints. My claims to candour are consequently few; for as the Editor, rather than the Author, I beg leave to observe, that with the materials before me, I have balanced, pretty equally as I think, my hopes of my readers' favour, with my fears of their frowns; and I stand chargeable with

no more than an error in judgment, or too much partiality for Miss Cowley's talents, in having preferred her pen to my own.

It is, however, indispensibly necessary, that I should prepare the way for her appearance as a candidate for public notice; and with as much of brevity as of fidelity, do I intend to make my first chapter useful to this purpose, by detailing such particulars of her family, birth, and circumstances of fortune, as are requisite for the better knowledge and illustration of those occurrences which engaged her time and attention, and furnished the principal subjects for her pen.

LADY MACLAIRN,

THE

VICTIM OF VILLANY.

CHAP. I.

MR. COWLEY, father of Miss Cowley, was, at an early age, left an orphan, with an ample inheritance in Jamaica, the place of his birth. He was consigned by the will of his father, who had survived his mother, to the guardianship of a gentleman who resided in London, and who, in his commercial concerns, had for a course of years evinced an integrity, founded on the liberal principles of an enlightened mind and a cultivated understanding. The care of his estate was left in the hands of a friend, not less

qualified for this more subordinate office. He lived on the spot; and was enriched by the vigilance and honesty with which he discharged his duty. His first care after his benefactor's decease, was to send the young heir to England, for the purpose of his improvement; and his London guardian, not only placed him within the reach of the attainments requisite for his future happiness, but by his truly parental care and tenderness, gave him the fairest example of the influence and benefits resulting from a conduct governed by virtue and solid wisdom. Thus secured on all sides by a gracious Providence, Henry Cowley lived to reach his twenty-first year; when, by the sudden death of his benevolent friend, he found himself master of his time, his fortune, and his amusements. But love had provided an armour of defence against the seductions of the world; and the difficulties he had to surmount in

attaining the object of his affections, gave to his youthful ardour pursuits far remote from the dangers of dissipation. To conquer the reluctance of Mrs. Dawson, the young lady's mother, to her daughter's marrying him, or any other pretender to her favour, was a trial, not only of his patience and perseverance, but also of her daughter's health and spirits; for she had long since given her heart to young Cowley, and well knew that the only impediment in the way to her union with the man she loved, was the excessive and fond attachment of her mother to her society, and the wish of having no competitor for a heart which she conceived to be made only for herself. The young lady's declining spirits, and the arguments urged by her lover, at length gained a cold consent, to which were annexed conditions that Cowley cheerfully agreed to. These were principally confined to the young couple's residence under her

roof, and a promise, never to hazard a voyage to Jamaica without her concurrence. Satisfied on these essential points, she hastened the nuptials, in order to expedite her removal with her daughter to Bristol Hot-Wells, whither she was ordered by her physician; and entirely regardless of procuring settlements, her daughter being an only child, the party proceeded from the altar to their destined abode at Clifton; where health, peace, and gaiety met the happy pair. Mrs. Dawson's apprehensions for the life of her beloved daughter, had not long subsided before she became alarmed for herself: the honey-moon continued longer than her forbearance; she imagined herself neglected. Fears and explanations were succeeded by altercations, and fits of sullenness and even rudeness to poor Cowley; who, in consideration of his wife's tranquillity, redoubled his attentions to her mother. This tribute of true affection

gained him nothing with Mrs. Dawson, for it unfortunately gave her daughter an opportunity of observing, more than once, that “ Mr. Cowley’s behaviour to her mother was of itself sufficient to engage her love, her esteem and gratitude.”

During the space of three years the amiable wife bore with patience these jealous caprices of her mother; not so acquiescent was the husband: he was weary of the contest, and the tender Marian trembled for her husband’s peace and her own future happiness. The death of Mr. Cowley’s faithful agent in Jamaica, which happened at this period, rendered a voyage thither indispensable to Mr. Cowley. He explicitly placed before his wife and her mother his intentions to visit his patrimony; and left them to decide whether he was to go unaccompanied by the only person who could solace him in his absence from England.

Mrs. Cowley firmly declared her purpose of going with him, and to every argument and intreaty used by her mother, applied the same answer:—"My duty, my affection, my very life, urge me to undertake a voyage which my husband hazards; and were it round the world I would cheerfully share the dangers with my Cowley." Let it suffice that Mrs. Cowley persevered, and from the hour of her daughter's departure, her mother nourished an irreconcilable hatred to Mr. Cowley; attributing to his cruelty and undue authority the absence of his wife, "who was not permitted to love even her mother, nor that mother to shelter her from his tyrannical temper."

Candour as well as the proofs before me, exact from my pen, however, some qualifications, which will soften down to the weakness of human nature these severe traits in Mrs. Dawson's character; for it would be unjust not to give it more

favourable lineaments, and amongst several, it is proper to distinguish one, namely, her generous cares in sheltering under her roof a young lady, who was left an orphan for more than three years, at the end of which period she married happily. As this act of friendship and benevolence on Mrs. Dawson's part produced a course of active and important duties on the young lady's, and as these are materially connected with my narrative, it must be allowed me to mention more particularly the advantages which had, at this period of my history, accrued to Mrs. Dawson from her kind protection of Miss Otway. Her age, her various talents, and her attractive virtues, had contributed to form Marian Dawson's mind, and to obviate the evils of her mother's unlimited indulgence. Till her marriage with Mr. Hardcastle, to whom she had been engaged before she lost her father, and whom from prudential motives she refus-

ed to marry when deprived of this support, her whole attention had been given to Miss Dawson's education; and although the instructress and the pupil differed not in age more than two or three years, nothing less than the blindest folly could have overlooked the rich recompence which Mrs. Dawson derived from her kindness to Miss Otway: the most perfect friendship and confidence subsisted between the young women. Cowley was the intimate friend of Mr. Hardcastle, though several years younger than himself, and few of Mrs. Dawson's connections doubted of the share which the Hardcastles had taken in the unhappy dissensions caused by Mrs. Dawson's ill-regulated fondness to her child. It is certain, that both Mr. and Mrs. Cowley had the concurrence of these friends in regard to the measures they pursued; and with the most sanguine hopes of succeeding, they both engaged to spare

no pains in reconciling Mrs. Dawson to the temporary absence of her son and daughter, nor in preparing her to expect Mr. Cowley to have an establishment of his own at his return. Faithful to their engagements, they in part effected their purpose. Their attentions soothed the afflicted mother. She found that she was not wholly abandoned; she talked of her poor unhappy child till compassion had subdued resentment, and time had banished tears and bewailings; and Mrs. Dawson again tasted the comforts of health, affluence, and friendship, although still dead to the pleasure of *forgiveness*, probably, because it was less painful to hate Cowley than to reproach herself.

Mr. Hardcastle's succession to his uncle's estate of about five or six hundred pounds per annum, induced a change in his plans of life. He gave up his profession in the law, and retired to his in-

heritance with his lady and child, then an infant. Mrs. Dawson suffered little from this change, for she passed months at a time with them in the country, and enjoyed the variety of the seasons with health, and few regrets beyond her usual topic for discontent. "Seven years a wife without the chance of being a mother," had not been unfrequently adverted to by Mrs. Dawson, as a proof of Mr. Cowley's demerits in the sight of Heaven. "He, that so fervently wished for children! But his wretched temper would have its punishments." Alas! his fond and too eager wishes had most unquestionably their disappointment in the hour of their fruition; for, in consequence of a fever which no skill could overcome, he lost his wife six weeks after she had given him a daughter. Mrs. Dawson sunk under this heavy stroke. Nothing remained but her enmity to Cowley; and in order to gratify this, she made her will.

To Rachel Marian Cowley, her granddaughter, she bequeathed all her property; but subjected it to conditions, which sufficiently marked her hatred to the infant's father. In case Mr. Cowley submitted to relinquish the rights of a parent, and to place his daughter under Mr. and Mrs. Hardcastle's care, the child was immediately after her decease to be conveyed to England, and given into their protection. On this condition, she was entitled to the annual interest resulting from the sum which constituted her fortune, and which was vested in the public funds, to the amount of a capital which produced more than six hundred pounds per annum. The father's refusal to concede to these terms, restricted her from the fortune till she was twenty-one, or till she married with the consent of Mr. Hardcastle and the other trustee appointed to this duty. In case of her death before she could claim her fortune, the

whole sum, with its accumulations, was left to Mr. Hardcastle and his family. Satisfied with this disposition of her worldly possessions, she appeared to have recovered her usual health and composure, except when speaking of her grand-child. On these affecting occasions, her only consolation appeared to rise from Mr. and Mrs. Hardcastle's reiterated promises to receive the child, whenever Mr. Cowley should think it proper to claim their kind offices. They repeated this assurance in the most solemn terms, and Mrs. Hardcastle, with ceaseless labour, endeavoured to fix on her mind the persuasion, that Mr. Cowley would think of no one but himself for so precious a charge. Mrs. Dawson was suddenly removed by an apoplectic fit the following winter; and Counsellor Steadman, her executor and trustee, in communicating to Mr. Hardcastle the contents of Mrs. Dawson's last will and testament, was neither surprised

nor offended at the sentiments his old friend so warmly expressed, though they were so opposite to the gratitude usually bestowed even on *contingent* donations; and having informed Mr. Cowley of this event, and its consequences, he left him to determine at his leisure, on the fitness of Mrs. Dawson's arrangements for his daughter's benefit and security.

During this period of time, the unhappy Mr. Cowley was giving the most unequivocal and melancholy proofs to those about him, of the affection he cherished for his amiable and lost Marian. A long and dangerous illness had succeeded to her death, the consequence of his attendance, fatigue, and grief; and when rescued from the grave by the vigour of his constitution, his friends found his mind sunk into the deepest gloom. From this deplorable condition, he was gradually roused by the sight of his infant daughter.

Happily the child was healthy, and had for its preservation an attendant well qualified to supply a mother's cares. Mrs. Cowley, on quitting England, had fortunately secured in the female attendant who accompanied her, more than the talents and fidelity of a domestic. Mrs. Allen was a widow ; she had been well instructed in her youth, and matured in wisdom and knowledge by a natural good sense, and the discipline of adversity. The *femme de chambre* was forgotten in the usual friend and companion of the voyage, and Mrs. Cowley introduced Mrs. Allen to her new circle in a manner suitable to her merits. To this excellent woman she in some sort bequeathed her infant, engaging her, in the most affecting terms, to watch over the child till it was safe with Mrs. Hardcastle, who had promised her to be its parent when in England. This request was enforced by Mr. Cowley also ; and Mrs. Allen forgot.

not her obligations in the performance of her duty. From the time of her lady's death, as she always called Mrs. Cowley, she regularly corresponded with Mrs. Hardcastle ; and from her letters to this lady, I have learned to judge both of Mr. Cowley's attachment to his wife and child, and of Mrs. Allen's good sense. I shall transcribe a part of one of the letters she wrote to Mrs. Hardcastle, when the child was something more than three years old: it delineates the condition of a father seeking refuge from sorrow in the indulgence of fondness, the fruits of which are too often found in bitter repentance. After an account of Mr. Cowley's improved health, and incessant demands on her little charge for the cheerfulness he still needed, she thus proceeds: " Judge, my dear Madam, what must be the result of this excessive fondness ! what must be the condition of a being, liable to contradiction and disappointment from

the very tenure on which she holds her being, who must never be controuled in her will, whose tears put Mr. Cowley into a fever, and whose infant caprices are laws which no one dare to disobey. Nature, my dear Madam, has formed her for a better purpose, than subduing her father's judgment by her attractive person and irresistible vivacity. But with all the sportive charms of infancy, with, I may say, redundant health and activity, with beauty to dazzle all sober judgment that views her in her happy moments, she cannot impose on me, nor quiet my apprehensions for her future life; for she has passions which need the curb, and those are hourly strengthening. Already she is more despotic with her father than he is with his slaves; and my influence with her depends only on her generous nature. She cannot bear to see me 'grieve,' to use her language: she has been just making her dear Allen '*well.*'

This was the occasion: a young and sweet-tempered negro girl in the house, has been with my concurrence promoted to her nursery; she plays with her, and is docile to my instructions. This, with the singular beauty she possesses, have gained her an interest with me, and I have taught her to read, and the habits of order. Marian was busy in making a cap for her doll this morning, when summoned to romp with her little tyrant. She begged for *a moment*—it was granted; but Marian still plied her needle: a blow on her face was the rebuke her tardiness met with, and the poor girl's tears followed it. No ways softened, 'her dear Missee' cuffed and kicked her, till I interposed, and, with a sorrowful tone, said, 'I must leave you, my child, you will make me sick and sorrowful, for I cannot love you.' The storm was allayed; and taking Marian by the hand, she left me without speaking a single

word. In a short time she returned, leading the poor girl laden with toys and her finery. 'Marian loves me now,' said she, creeping to my knees, 'she has kissed me—will not you? I am sorry. I will be good, if it will make you well;—do smile, only smile once.' Such is the child that claims your forming hand : have pity on her, Madam; use your influence over her father, urge him to perform his duty ; every day she remains with him will render your task of love and friendship more difficult."

This letter produced its desired effect ; for, some months after its date, the following one appears to have been addressed to Mr. Hardcastle, from Mr. Cowley. As it will serve to ascertain his character, I shall transcribe its contents.—"Your wife has conquered, my dear friend. I have at length summoned up resolution to be a parent and a man. Good God ! thou

only knowest the price of the sacrifice to my duty! and thou only canst render it propitious to thy creature! But I will still hope in thy mercies. My child, Hardcastle, has been spared hitherto; she has happily encountered, not only the diseases peculiar to her tender age, but also the small-pox, which she has had, since our last dispatches, in the mildest form, and is now in *perfect health*. To what purpose has she been thus preserved? Not to be the victim of my doating fondness. My promise to her dear mother shall be fulfilled, and whilst it is yet time to save her from a father's weakness. Captain Vernon, who loved her mother, and whose attachment to this child is little less than my own, shall be entrusted with her; and Mrs. Allen will attend her. You may expect to see her with the next Jamaica fleet."

"I have only to observe to you, as I

have done to Counsellor Steadman, that I consider Mrs. Dawson's legacy to my daughter, as totally remote from any calculations of her expences as my child ; I shall never interfere with him as to the disposal of the money. I have long since forgotten Mrs. Dawson's weaknesses and prejudices, nor did I need any inducement for my conduct of the nature she supposed. My wife's dying request in regard to her infant, shall be religiously observed ; and it is an unspeakable consolation to me to know, that the friend whom she appointed as her substitute, is as willing to engage in the duty as she expected. I shall remit you annually eight hundred per annum for her and Mrs. Allen's maintenance under your roof. You know that this excellent woman is bound by her engagement to her mother to serve her. You know the station she has filled in my house since the death of my wife. Mrs. Hardcastle is prepared to

meet in her a valuable addition to her family : she will not be disappointed ; for her modest worth will ensure her a welcome in any abode where virtue dwells.

“ I entreat you, my dear Hardcastle, to curb your disinterested spirit, whilst I indulge my provident one, as it relates to my child’s accommodations. She must have a nursing maid, she will need a carriage ; and I have explained myself fully to the counsellor on these points. In regard to my expectations as these relate to my child’s advantage, they are incalculable ! I fondly hope when we meet again to behold her adorned in the attractive graces of modesty and gentleness, rich in piety, and principled in duty : such was her mother, and to Mrs. Hardcastle was she indebted for the example she rivalled. Forget not to prepare her for wealth, she will be probably amongst the number of those whom the world envies. Teach her,

Hardcastle, the *duties* annexed to wealth, and give her those treasures that will amply supply the want of gold."

The remaining part of the letter is suppressed as useless to the subject before us, although it marks the utmost anxiety and tenderness for the object of Mr. Cowley's cares.

Rachel Cowley had nearly attained her fifth year, when she was joyfully received in London by Mrs. Hardcastle. Mrs. Allen had prudently refused to have any attendant with her on the voyage, and had not Captain Vernon's fondness for her pupil frustrated her designs, it is probable the little rebel to authority might have appeared to greater advantage in the eyes of wisdom than she did. But the extreme loveliness of her person, her near affinity to a friend still tenderly regretted, and the circumstances under

which she beheld her, soon rendered Mrs. Hardcastle favourably disposed towards a child whose misfortune it had been, to be from her birth the idol of slaves, and the ruler of their master. A few days were given to Mrs. Allen's business and the child's repose in town, when they were conducted to the home which Heaven had graciously destined for them.

Mr. Hardcastle's house was a fit abode for its inmates, and from the hour it became the family residence, Mr. Hardcastle had given up a profession he never loved, and relinquished the pursuits of the barrister for those of the farmer, and the indulgence of a taste which had rendered his habitation an ornament to the adjacent country. The little stranger was met at Worcester by Mr. Hardcastle and his two children. This excursion was short for them, but its delights were of importance, for it prepared the new

comer for the pleasures of Heathcot-Farm; and by the time the little group had reached the room appointed for their recreation, the epithets of brother and sister were become favourites. It may appear useless minutia to delineate the characters of the children thus become our heroine's playmates; but no author is without opinions of his own: and in consequence of the privileges which my own pen at this period of my history gives me, I think it necessary to describe Mrs. Hardcastle's pupils.

Lucy Hardcastle had nearly attained her eighth year, when her mother's duties were called upon in favour of Miss Cowley. Horace, her brother, was not yet seven, and of a disposition so similar to that of the little stranger, that he soon engrossed her favour and preference. Of Lucy it might be said, that nature had cast her in a mould so perfect, that for

every proof of punctual care and tenderness, she paid "love—fair looks—and true obedience."

"Still thinking all too little payment for so great a debt," the judicious mother of these children had, from the first indications of the difference which nature had marked in their characters, applied to each the peculiar culture which each demanded; and though the bold and vigorous shoots of her son's ardent spirit were still unsubdued, yet she had trained him to obedience and docility by the firmness and gentleness of her guiding hand; and force could meet contradiction without petulance. His activity, his gay and volatile spirits, endeared him to a companion as fearless of danger and fatigue as himself, and whose ingenuity rivalled his own in expedients to direct and enjoy every interval of time allotted to play. In the first

instance of Mrs. Hardcastle's exercise of her jurisdiction, she had found Horace a very useful agent in her purposes of wisdom. Her new pupil, with infantile fondness, was ambitious of learning all that Horace learnt, and she became stationary at his elbow with her lesson whilst he studied his, in order that she might run and frolic with him when his task was accomplished. Without tracing the probable effects of these early impressions on minds constituted to love and harmonize with each other, it shall suffice, that it was frequently observed in the family, that the habit of yielding up her will to Horace, was become so easy a lesson to Rachel Cowley, that she practised compliance even with her maid-servant. As she advanced in age, this preference became more useful to her, and more noticed by those around her; and the obvious stimulus to every exertion of her talents, was the wish to please her

“ brother Horace.” Mrs. Hardcastle was gratified by the effects which had resulted from the uniform principles of her pupil’s mind, and from which had sprung the most promising of her hopes, as these fondly contemplated the future excellencies and happiness of a young creature endeared to her heart by time, and ties not less strong than those of the mother to a favoured child. The good Mrs. Allen, engaged in her subordinate duties of watching over the personal comforts of the children, saw with delight the impetuosity of her darling’s temper gradually yielding to the mild controul of the timid Lucy, and every angry passion bowing down to the check of Horace’s eye. But Mr. Hardcastle, alive to every suggestion of a mind scrupulously just, and whose acquaintance with the human heart was founded on experience more than on the speculations of theorists and philosophers, could without

difficulty recal the period, at which, in the elegant language of our poetress, he might himself have addressed his wife when a girl of eleven or twelve years old with these harmonious lines :

“ When first upon your tender cheek
I saw the morn of beauty break
 With mild and cheering beam,
I bow’d before your infant shrine,
The earliest sighs you had were mine,
 And you my darling theme.

“ I saw you in that opening morn,
For beauty’s boundless empire born,
 And first confess’d your sway ;
And e’er your thoughts, devoid of art,
Could learn the value of a heart,
 I gave my heart away.”

The peculiar circumstances of fortune in which Miss Cowley had been left by Mrs. Dawson’s will, her prospects in life, and above all, the confidence which her father had placed in her principles,

strengthened his apprehensions for his son's future conduct, and the consequences to be expected from so apparent an attachment and sympathy in character, as his vigilant eye detected in the mutual, though childish conversation of a boy and a girl. He communicated his fears to his wife; and the separation which followed, was the tribute which virtue and rectitude exacted from the tender parents. Horace was sent to his maternal uncle's, to complete his education; and the same year Mrs. Harcastle commenced her annual visit to London, for three months, in order to give her young charge, then in her twelfth year, the advantages of the first-rate masters in those accomplishments which her fortune rendered necessary. A circle of friends, who, like herself, conceived that no girl beyond the age of infancy could be better placed than in the drawing-room, in a society composed of both

sexes, qualified and disposed to be useful to their innocence and improvement, bounded Mrs. Hardcastle's town amusements, and spared her the lessons necessary to the young candidate for notice, who at a certain age is emancipated from the routine of a school, or a nursery in the attic ; or in other words, "brought out" for the gaze of idle curiosity, and to be disposed of to the highest bidder.

Rachel Cowley's introduction to the world was unmarked by any *eclat* of this kind ; and whilst probably she and her friend Lucy were daily acquiring good manners and knowledge, they neither suspected nor thought of the extent of the obligations they were under to those who were forming their minds, and determining their future taste for the enjoyments of *rational* and responsible beings.

During this period of Miss Cowley's life, her father had gradually recovered his health and spirits ; urged by the remonstrances and arguments of his friends, he had, on parting with his daughter, employed his leisure, and diverted his mind by building a house on a newly purchased plantation nearer to Kingston, and within the reach of a friend to whom he was peculiarly attached. Amused by this object of pursuit, he was led to other improvements of the spot; and in his new abode he saw another Eden bloom, without the sad recollection which had haunted his footsteps in the favourite retreat of his still regreted wife and his beloved child. Mr. Cowley, in consequence of his multiplied avocations, and the renewal of his social feelings, became satisfied with mentioning from time to time his *intention* of visiting England.

Mr. Hardcastle was no stranger to

the real cause of his friend's delay, but his prudence concealed from his ward a subject of regret to himself, and of concern to his wife and Mrs. Allen. The negro girl who had been selected, for the sweetness of her temper and the graces of nature, as the playmate in Miss Cowley's nursery, had gained the notice of her father, and had enjoyed Mrs. Allen's attentions to her improvement in useful learning. It had been debated whether Marian might not have been serviceable to her young lady during the voyage: the proposal had been rejected; for Mrs. Allen perfectly understood that the compliances of a slave were not of that sort which her pupil needed. She therefore left the girl to the care of the house-keeper, and in a condition of ease and comfort under Mrs. Cowley's roof. Poor Cowley was soothed in his first depression of spirits on losing sight of his idol, by finding he had a sharer in his sorrow;

and he gratified his benevolence by being Marian's consoler. She in her turn solaced his lonely hours by talking of her "dear missee," and accompanying him in his walks. Habits of affection and kindness were thus mutually formed, and gave rise to an attachment incompatible with innocence and honour. At an early age Marian was formally emancipated from her chains as a *negro slave*, in order to bear the shackles of a mistress. But in this deviation from his hitherto regular and moral conduct, Mr. Cowley forgot not *décorum*; his favourite resided with privacy at the more remote plantation, which was called the Creek Savannah, and he lived in the new house already mentioned. His friends, who loved him, overlooked a frailty which unfortunately was not particularly Mr. Cowley's weakness; but they did more; for they attributed his conduct to the steady purpose of remaining unmarried for his daughter's sake.

Mr. Hardcastle's opinions were not of this pliant sort; but he well knew that his arguments would be lost on a man who had silenced his own principles of religious observances: certain that Miss Cowley had experienced no failure of her father's affection or generosity, he contented himself with performing his duty, and providing against the consequences so unavoidably connected with Mr. Cowley's absence from his child. He well knew, that without the reciprocal acts of love and duty, the ties of consanguinity would be feeble. He had daily proofs that Miss Cowley was little affected by the protracted promises contained in her father's letters; that her happiness was centered in the bosom of his family, and that the thought of being separated from it, never occurred as within the line of probability. Every means of prudence had been applied to obviate this evil. Conversations had been pur-

posely appointed, to keep up in her memory "her dear father," his affection for her, "his sacrifice of his comforts for her benefit." "His generosity and amiable temper" were traced with minuteness; and her petitions to Heaven included mercies for a parent, so justly entitled to her duty and love. These lessons of wisdom had not been lost on the docile heart of the child. She listened with pleasure to these tales of her "good papa," and forgot him when clinging to her "mamma Hardcastle." As she advanced in age, Mr. and Mrs. Hardcastle more assiduously attended to the views before them; and with the entire persuasion of their own minds, that the time was rapidly approaching, when Mr. Cowley would recal his daughter, they endeavoured to prepare her for the summons. To this intent, Mrs. Hardcastle sometimes read to her extracts from her mother's letters, in which she described

the natural beauties of Jamaica ; the society she had met with ; the estimation in which her husband was held ; her own amusements and happy life ; and the activity and benevolent cares which supplied to her husband an indemnification for the absence of his London friends. Unacquainted with disguise, Miss Cowley left no doubt on Mrs. Hardcastle's mind as to the impressions which these letters and her conversations produced. Anxious wishes for her father's settling in London, and a declared repugnance to living in Jamaica, were the constant result of these attempts ; and it was now become necessary to call upon a reason sufficiently cultivated to yield an assent to every argument of duty. Alarmed by an earnestness which she considered as immediately springing from Mr. Hardcastle's knowing her father's intention of recalling her home, she wrote to him a letter expressive of

her fears, and to implore him to leave a country in which *she* should be miserable. The reply to this letter is before me. Mr. Cowley assures his daughter, that he has no intention of endangering her health and safety in a voyage to him, nor any plans before him which will remove her from the protecting arms of "her dear Mrs. Hardcastle." He thus proceeds: "The habits of many years have made my avocations pleasurable: indolence and indolence stand in the way of your wishes and my own views; yet I hope to be with you next year in your dear foggy island. Be satisfied, my dear Rachel, with this assurance, and believe that my procrastination proceeds from my regard for your happiness, not from any abatement of my tenderness. You are, my child, under the eye of a mother, qualified to render you worthy of the one who bore you. I am not jealous of her ascend-

ancy over you; tell her so; and that you have my permission to love her as tenderly as you can. She will be too just and too generous to monopolize your whole heart; but she will not forget to decorate that corner of it which your father occupies, and which a husband may share, with the ornament which passeth shew. Continue, as you have done, to deserve her maternal cares, and remain the hope of your truly affectionate father,

“HENRY COWLEY.”

“P. S. I write to Hardcastle, and Captain Vernon will inform you of my good looks, tho’ not in the rapturous style, in which he speaks of my lovely girl, and his Heathcot holidays.”

CHAP II.

THUS passed the first transient cloud which had depressed the gaiety of Miss Cowley's temper; and, delighted by the contents of her father's letter, the glow of gratitude gave him an interest in her bosom which she had never before felt, and supplied her with a never-failing motive for proving herself worthy of such a father. In the following winter all was gloom and sadness at Heathcot. Mrs. Hardcastle was at first, to use her own encouraging words, "only slightly indisposed with a cold;" but the malady was of that sort which, whilst it represses hope, fallaciously invites it; and the calm

and patient invalid, unwilling to break down its deceitful promises, aided the deceiver by her endearing smiles and uniform serenity, till her strength was subdued, and medicine was found useless. Month had thus succeeded to month: during this period Mrs. Hardcastle contemplated, with a foresight of that recompense she was shortly to reach, the fruits of well-doing, by witnessing the conduct of a child who had for so many years shared her maternal cares, and had been so peculiarly an object of her solicitude and vigilance. She beheld the restless and volatile girl, stationed in the sick room, sedate, tender, and assiduous; prompt in every soothing, kind office; dexterous in every expedient to relieve and alleviate; patient of all opposition, and unwearied in watching by her side. She saw her character rising into magnanimity as the danger augmented; supporting by her fortitude the sinking spirits

of Lucy, and cheering the despondency of Mr. Hardcastle by arguments drawn from a faith in which she herself trusted for support. She saw the pang of anguish checked by a smile of tender sympathy; and with the greetings of love and assumed cheerfulness, she saw the cheek of her beloved pupil pale with fatigue and grief. Horace could not be kept from a scene of this kind; he had been summoned home some weeks before his mother's case was judged hopeless; and Mrs. Hardcastle, either too much occupied with different thoughts, or too happy in the presence of her son to attend to those cautions which had banished him from his home, saw, without shewing any inquietude, that time had not weakened the affection of her children. Miss Cowley seemed rather to invite her animadversions on her conduct, as this related to Horace; and one day she even ventured to observe to the con-

tented mother, who had been gratified by some tender office in which Horace had assisted, “ that *she at least* could not be surprised by seeing that Horace Hardcastle was still Rachel Cowley’s *favourite*.” The smile with which this observation was received had in it nothing for discouragement; and Mrs. Hardcastle added, “ that she hoped he would always be the favourite with the wise and virtuous.”

A few days before she expired, she found, on awaking from a lethargic slumber, Miss Cowley and Horace watching at her bedside. “ You have been sleeping, my dear mother,” said Horace, “ and we have insisted on Lucy and Mrs. Allen’s going into the garden for a little air.” Miss Cowley during this time was prepared with a cordial for the patient; and she, raising herself, was supported by her son. She took the offered

medicine in her feeble hands, and fixing her eyes on Miss Cowley, said something, but so low, that neither of the interested witnesses of this scene could understand it. "Oh, it was her blessing," cried the agonized Horace, "her *last* blessing on" ——— "*my children*," said the subdued mother, sinking on her pillow, and convulsively holding their hands in her own. Horace, unable to maintain any longer his self-command, hastily left the room, and Miss Cowley silently gave herself up to tears. The exhausted invalid again dosed; and she breathed her last sigh, without further confirming the ardent wishes of those to whom her concurrence would have been a sanction for that affection which both believed she wished not to oppose, and which both as fondly hoped would have rendered her happy.

Mrs. Hardcastle's death appeared for a

time to have overwhelmed the family with all the force of a sudden and unexpected blow; every one wanted consolation, but none was found who could administer it. Mr. Hardcastle was the first who was capable of exertions; he recollected Lucy, and the feelings of the husband awakened those of the father. Religion sheds its balm on its true votaries: domestic comfort succeeded; and Mr. Hardcastle in contemplating the child before him, blessed Heaven for the solace it gave to his sorrow.

Lucy was not long without discovering, that her brother had found a sweet consolation in Miss Cowley's sympathy and society; and she began to wonder, that her father should have so apparently overlooked what had so recently called forth her observation, namely, that Horace, near twenty years old, was a more dangerous guest than when short of fifteen.

Perfectly acquainted with the motives which had led her father to submit to his absence, she took an opportunity of remarking to her friend, that Horace's unguarded behaviour would soon banish him again from Heathcot; and that she was surprised he had been permitted to stay so long, which she solely attributed to his father's state of mind, and his being so much alone. "If you had been as observant of my conduct as of your brother's," replied Miss Cowley with seriousness, "you would have perceived what you call the same indiscretion on my part; for the truth is, we wish not to conceal an affection on which our happiness depends. Horace knows that I love him, and I know he loves me, and whether at Heathcot or in the deserts of Arabia, we shall live for each other. I am too young, you will say," continued she with increased seriousness of manner,

“ to decide thus positively on a business of such importance to my future happiness. But I answer, that I am not a romantic girl. I will stand the test of time with cheerfulness ; for either I have no title to the name of a natural being, or I am qualified to judge of Horace’s title to my esteem and regard. I shall place before my father, as soon as we meet, the *solid* grounds I have for my preference of your brother : I will leave to his judgment and liberality of mind to determine the time when I may be supposed to know my own heart, and to consider whether Mr. Hardcastle’s son will be any disgrace to Mr. Cowley or his supposed wealth. But I have no apprehensions on this point. My father is a generous minded man. He married for happiness himself, and he would revolt at the idea of sacrificing his daughter at the shrine of avarice or ambition. No, no, Lucy, “ added she

with animation," in attaching my affections to an honest and worthy man, I have not sinned against that authority which my father claims; and to give me to a Hardcastle for life will be the consummation of that parental love which consigned me into the hands of your excellent mother. He will soon be here; he will appeal to your father's understanding and tried friendship; Mr. Hardcastle will discard his scruples, and sanction, with his consent, my right to the name I revere. "We shall be sisters," continued she, fondly kissing Lucy's cheek. "One bond of love will unite us for life. I have no fears."

Miss Hardcastle, fully convinced that nothing could be gained in favour of prudence and circumspection during the influence of hopes so sanguine in favour of love, suffered her friend's earnestness to abate, without opposing her fond be-

lief by producing those difficulties which she foresaw would arise to baffle her intentions and to disturb her brother's happiness. She soon quitted the room, in order to consider those steps necessary to its security, and the conduct she had to pursue. But Lucy Hardcastle had been taught to consider a positive duty as liable to no appeal from inclination. She knew, that, in order to prevent Miss Cowley's growing attachment to her brother, her parents had yielded up a point, on which depended their highest satisfactions. Her mother had frequently mentioned losing sight of her son, as one of those privations which had exercised her fortitude in a peculiar degree; and that she could never have supported his absence from his father's tuition, and her own love, but from the considerations of the duty she owed to Mr. Hardcastle, and the reverence she felt for his judgment. With this example before her,

Lucy hastily repaired to her father and ingenuously imparted to him her own suspicions. "Disposed as I am," continued she smiling, "to favour those lovers, I think it my duty, my dear Sir, to refer myself to you. I shall soon be Rachel's confidant, and governed as I shall be, by my affection for her and for my brother, I may be led to oppose your will, and frustrate your plans of wisdom and prudence. I am certain that their early attachment is confirmed and strengthened by their respectively discovering the improvements which time has produced in both."

"I would rather see your brother *dead*, than the husband of this young creature!" replied Mr. Hardcastle, rising with emotion; "or rather, let me implore death for my relief, before I see him pointed at as the base and interested purloiner of this girl's affections! I know too well,

my child, the malignity of human nature. In a case like this, no allowance would be made, by far the greater part of the world, for motives more pure and honourable than a sordid consideration of her wealth,—her attractive beauty, and his age of passion. The natural results of undepraved youth and innocence would be set aside, in order to brand that father with infamy, who thus provided for his own son, by cheating another of his daughter. But this is not all: you know the tenor of Mrs. Dawson's will. My honour and reputation have hung on this child's life from the hour she has been under my roof; for her death would secure to me her grandmother's property. Your dear mother, in this single instance, opposed her opinion to mine. On pointing out to her the *hazard* of receiving into our hands a child thus circumstanced, she laughed at my fears, and asked me, whether her husband had so

lived, as to be in danger of any imputation on his integrity. ‘Be more just to yourself,’ said she, with honest pride; ‘the virtue which has marked your life, will be your security. You stand beyond the reach of that malice which would dare to conceive that Hardcastle would take advantage of the helpless innocence of an infant committed to his care.’ She urged her promise to Mrs. Cowley, and to Mrs. Dawson, and with dignity, added, that Rachel Cowley could be no where so secure as with *her heirs*. ‘We will perform our duty, my dear husband,’ said she, ‘and trust to Heaven for a recompence, of more value than her money.’ I was conquered; and Heaven in its mercy has preserved this child’s life. But what think you would be the conclusions drawn from Horace’s marrying her? They are too apparent not to be seen. ‘Foiled in one expectation,’ it will be said, ‘Hardcastle has

succeeded in a more lucrative project. *A marriage* will not only secure to his son Mrs. Dawson's fortune, but Mr. Cowley's princely revenue also ; and by favouring his son's views, and entangling the girl's heart, he has enriched his family.' How would you repel a scandal of this nature, my dear child? Not by saying, that Miss Cowley loved your brother ; for that would only prove that she had been betrayed by the insidious flattery to which she was exposed.—I have been too heedless," added Mr. Hardcastle, " my mind of late has been ——!" Mr. Hardcastle's firmness yielded—he pressed Lucy to his bosom, and wept audibly.

On reassuming his composure, he proceeded to inform his daughter, that he had, for nearly a week, been hesitating in what manner to answer an application, which Mr. Freeman, her uncle, had

transmitted to his consideration, relative to Horace. "You have, my dear girl, been useful to your father; by your information," added he, "I shall no longer want resolution. In regard to Miss Cowley, remember that I wish not to interrupt the confidence which subsists between you, nor will I tempt your honesty by a single question. You know the reasons which force me to refuse to your brother an object so worthy of his admiration, and my tender regard. I leave to your prudence to point out the conduct you ought to pursue with your friend; and after you have perused your uncle's letter, you will be prepared to mention to her Horace's removal from England."

Poor Lucy felt that virtue had its conflicts in her bosom; and hastily retiring, gave herself up to the regret of having, by her interference, doomed her brother

to an undetermined course of banishment.

The subject of the letter in question necessarily requires some information relative to the character and situation of the writer, Horace's uncle. The Rev. Mr. Freeman having succeeded to a village living, of about four hundred pounds per annum, in the vicinity of Exeter, at an advanced period of his life, and with the peculiar habits of a man who had for many years lived in his college, appeared, on settling in his excellent parsonage-house, to have forgotten that "it was not good for man to be alone." His friends and neighbours frequently reminded him, notwithstanding, that his house was too large for a bachelor, and that he was *losing time*. Mr. Freeman had already experienced the justness of this latter observation; for, with painful regret, it recalled to his memory, that his season for

happiness was irrecoverably passed. He had been tenderly attached to an amiable young woman at an early period of his life; and whilst his expectations were undecided in regard to that provision necessary for her security, his talents and conduct soon distinguished him at the university; and, supported by mutual esteem and hope, the lovers looked forwards to happiness. The death of the lady interrupted this calm prospect. Mr. Freeman became a “book-worm,” “a quiz,” and a tutor in his college, who suited no young man of spirit. Notwithstanding this character, he had, with all his singularities to boot, acquired such a reputation for learning, and the happy talent of communicating it, that his friends seemed determined to pursue him to his retreat; and he at length yielded to the plan they proposed, of receiving four pupils under his roof. These were young men whose fathers

conceived a couple of years noviciate, passed with Mr. Freeman, fully adequate to the advantages of being freed from the restraints of a grammar-school, for the enjoyment of a fellow-commoner's gown. Amongst the number of those who had respected the "sanctified" tutor at — college, was the Duke of J——, then at the university. Some short time after Horace Hardcastle had become an inmate in Mr. Freeman's house, this nobleman's son was also consigned to his uncle's care, for the twofold purposes of his education and the preservation of his health. Lord William S—— had, from his cradle, been extremely delicate; and in proportion as he grew up, consumptive symptoms had appeared. Scotland had been judged too unfriendly a climate for so tender a plant, and the duchess had serious arguments to produce against every public seminary of learning. The young man's father had not forgotten

his college tutor, and the mild air of Devonshire promised an amendment in health for his son. Mr. Freeman yielded to a solicitation thus urged; and although the pupil was not yet fourteen, and intruded on the fixed number, he was admitted. The amiable boy reached the priory before Horace had ceased to repent his absence from Heathcot-Farm; and the young nobleman soon found in him a companion more peculiarly attractive to his gentleness of temper, from the absence of that gaiety and activity of spirit, which was so distinguished a characteristic of Horace's mind. Grateful to a youth, who, although his senior, did not overlook him, as the more advanced pupils did; and who was neither too wise for his amusement, nor too insignificant for his associate, he attached himself to Hardcastle, with all the enthusiasm which results from warm affections and an unperverted nature;

and leaving to themselves the young men whose attainments placed them beyond their sphere of action, the newly arrived pupils gradually cemented those bonds of friendship, which, with the virtuous, not unfrequently prove the most indissoluble. When Horace was summoned to his mother's sick room, he had left his companion under a severe attack of the unrelenting cough; and so serious were now the symptoms of decay, that it was determined he should try the effects of sea-air and a voyage. A vessel was prepared with the sole view to his accommodation; a medical gentleman was engaged to accompany him, and a tutor was appointed for his guide and companion. Frequent voyages and short intervals of refreshment in more southern latitudes, were the objects of these arrangements; and the mild and uncomplaining invalid, looked forwards with delight to the prospect of thus visiting

every port in the Mediterranean. Nothing was absent from this sanguine picture of hope, but his friend Horace; and without him, the gay colouring sunk at once into the flat and insipid sameness of a ship's cabin, or was charged with the desponding tints of never beholding him again. His father, who was with him, soon discovered his wishes; and immediately applied to Mr. Freeman for his good offices with Mr. Hardcastle, assuring him, that neither the young gentleman's time nor interest should be lost by a compliance with his request. This proposal was the subject of Mr. Freeman's letter to Horace's father; and the plan recommended, was not only favourable to Horace's future views, but also advantageous to his further improvement. The difficulties which had suspended Mr. Hardcastle's decision, will be easily imagined: his honour silenced the fond remonstrances of his heart; and he

determined on a separation, which would at once exclude his son from all personal intercourse with Miss Cowley for a longer time than he conceived her father would permit her to remain unmarried.

He lost no time in placing before his son his uncle's proposal, and his own entire concurrence in the plan. "In this sacrifice of my own comforts for your advantage," added the father, "I shall, I must be amply indemnified by seeing you escape from the danger which menaces you under my roof. In the duties of *friendship*, you may, my son, safely indulge the sensibility of a warm and affectionate nature; but in the presence of a beautiful girl, endeared to you by the sweet ties of infant sportiveness and familiar approach, you have forgotten, Horace, that passion and imagination are the usual rocks on which the honour and security of a young man are ship-

wrecked. I know that your principles are sound; I also know, that in the present delusion of your senses, there is no mixture of a sordid consideration in regard to Miss Cowley's wealth. No, Horace, you are too generous for such views, and she is too attractive to need them. But tell me, with what arguments would you confute the charge so strongly to be inferred from the circumstances in which we are placed relatively to this young lady, by her grand-mother's will? I know Mr. Cowley, and I believe him to be a liberal-minded man; but would Horace Hardcastle find in an *extorted* consent to his union with his daughter, the approbation needful for his *honour*? Recollect, that a gift not freely bestowed, is, and must be, oppressive to a noble mind; and the tenderness and weakness of a parent, who yields to the importunities of a fond, love-sick girl, furnish no excuse for the man who has fradu-

lently counteracted her parent's views and expectations, by gaining an empire over her affections. Be more just to yourself, my son. You want not wealth to elevate you, nor firmness to conquer your present feelings. Be not deceived by the enthusiasm which now governs you. The good report of your fellow-creatures is of more importance to your happiness than you believe; and from the censure which will involve you and myself of having made a property of this lovely girl, and cheated her unsuspecting and generous father, there will be no appeal even to the candid. "I will go," answered Horace, his face crimsoned with blushes, "I will go to the farthest part of the globe, to spare you from such calumny. But I must love Rachel Cowley, or cease to live. Suffer me to depart with this shield to guard my youth, with this invigorating hope, that I may one day convince her father that I am

worthy *of her*, if not of *his fortune*. Let him, if it please him, build hospitals with his money: I shall not want it!" "Trusting to the effects of time and absence," answered Mr. Hardcastle, "I will finish this conversation, by my positive prohibition of your corresponding with Miss Cowley, either directly or indirectly, during your absence. I wish you to receive this command, as qualified by parental love. She is young, my dear Horace, as well as yourself; trust to your father; you may both change your present sentiments. Leave her to the only test of a permanent affection—more acquaintance with the world, and more knowledge of herself. Her situation and sphere in life will soon be very different from what they are at present. The society and the pleasures of the world will solicit her attention, and although I do not believe she will ever forget her early friends, time and absence

may, and will weaken the present impressions of her mind. Trust also something to my experience; even *you*, my dear Horace, may forget to a certain degree, this amiable young woman. You will be engaged in pursuits, which may, without any miracle, direct your thoughts from present objects; and you may live to feel, that Mr. Cowley's daughter is not necessary to your happiness." Poor Horace's agitations were not concealed. "Before we part," added the tender father, "let me assure you, that were this young creature *any* but what she *is*, I would select her from amidst thousands as a wife for my son. Let this assertion content you, and convince you of the importance I affix to the *firm* opposition I make to your affection. Be then *a Hardcastle*; and submit your passions to that controul which will secure to you the blessings of *a Hardcastle*."

A short interval was allotted for the young man's preparations in order to his joining Lord William. Miss Cowley's firmness not only supported this hour, but also her friend Lucy's more tender spirits. She spoke of Horace's departure with calmness, and observed from time to time, that he could not better fill up a year or too than by travelling. On the morning he left the parental roof, she further manifested her resolution and spirit. Poor Horace rose to obey the third or fourth summons which had announced that "all was ready." "We part," said she, offering him her glowing cheek, "as brother and sister—such be our adieux. But when next we meet, Horace, this hand shall testify the faith and truth of Rachel Cowley. *Thus I plight it!*" She raised her eyes to heaven, grasped his hand a moment, and then darted from the room, leaving Mr.

Hardcastle to his surprise, and to comfort his son.

A few weeks after Horace had quitted England, Miss Cowley's tranquillity was again interrupted. She had sent her father, with some specimens of her own talents in drawing, her picture at full length; this was the work of the first artist in London, and was acknowledged to be not only a capital picture, but also a striking resemblance of her by those friends who had seen it. Mr. Cowley, on receiving it, appears to have given indulgence to all the feelings of nature, in beholding the portrait of a child so dear to him, an object of delight and admiration to his friends. He praises the design, the attitude; in a word, the skill of the painter in the highest terms. "But," adds he, "if such be thy external endowments, he has had a subject for his labours worthy of them." He con-

tinues in this stile of gaiety to inform her, that, notwithstanding "the hazel eyes," which are said to be his gift, he thinks she so much resembles her mother, that he had placed her picture opposite to her mother's portrait; and that he passes from one to the other, with sensations at once pleasurable and painful. "Your arrival, in the mean time," continues he, "has been celebrated by a grand dinner, to which my friends resorted in crowds. Curiosity and admiration at length gave place to a contest between the 'dove-like blue eyes,' and the 'saucy hazel ones.' Your champions were Captain Vernon and your old friend Oliver Flint, whom you will remember as your favourite, although you threw your wax doll at his head, because he said it was prettier than Marian. As to your other valorous knight, I have only to recommend to you, when you next see him with his cargo of

sweetmeats, to caution him to be more moderate in his zeal for your glory; for had he not been arrack-proof as completely as he is salt-water proof, he had been a dead man; for by maintaining your cause he has had a fever, which frightened his poor wife into a sick bed." This letter finishes by mentioning the arrival of two strangers in Jamaica; namely, a gentleman of the name of Flamall, with his nephew, Mr. Philip Flint, the posthumous brother of Mr. Oliver Flint, the gentleman already mentioned in his letter. "My worthy old friend," continues Mr. Cowley, "has drooped ever since the loss of his sons. I do not wonder that this has been the case. They had been his support under the severe trials of losing a good wife, and several other children. They had attained to an age in which he might, and had reasonably hoped to find in them a support and comfort to his grave.

In one week an epidemic fever rendered him *childless*. Poor Oliver was for a time overwhelmed by this dreadful blow; but the constitution of his mind and body have saved him. He turned his thoughts to remedy his grief, not to repinings for an affliction sent him, as he said, 'for his good;' and he has found one in this young brother, whom he never knew till lately. This child was the fruit of his father's second marriage, who died at an advanced age, leaving his young widow pregnant. The young man's name is Philip, and his age nearly that of poor Oliver's eldest son, who was also christened Philip. On this slight conformity the good old man erected his hopes of supplying to himself an heir and a consolation. The appearance of this young man, who is accompanied by his maternal uncle Mr. Flamall, has renovated poor Oliver. He is, indeed, a most promising and handsome young man, and

my friend already fancies he resembles his son: no one contests this point with him; nor is there any one who does not think the young man worthy of his brother's protection. He is well educated, and his manners are pleasing and polite, though rather too reserved and circumspect for some amongst us. These strangers have made a rake of me for some time; but I have refused to dine with the *heir apparent*, in order to write to you more at my leisure. Since your picture has graced my saloon, your old friend Oliver can talk of nothing but getting a wife for his idol; and this morning Mr. Flamall explicitly began a negotiation for my girl, stating his nephew's great expectations from his sister, an old maiden lady, whose name is Lucretia Flint. This, with Mr. Flint's fortune, is a *bait*, but not one for your father, my child. I have not forgotten your dear mother: to her undivided af-

fection, not *her money*, was I indebted for my happiness; and, instead of years passed in contention and wretchedness, I had the satisfaction of knowing that my wife preferred her husband to his rival, although that rival was *her mother*. I do not believe you have been instructed to despise a man, simply because he stands well in your father's opinion; nor will that father, my dear child, bargain away your happiness, in order to add acre to acre. I told Mr. Flamall, with more jocularly than seriousness, that I meant to see my girl before I gave her away, and to know the value of my merchandise before I *sold it*. Be not, however, surprised should you see your old friend Mr. Flint; for, coward as he is, I verily believe he would cross the Atlantic in a boat to plead with you for his darling Philip."

Kind as this letter was, it alarmed

Miss Cowley. She once more renewed her entreaties on the subject of her father's leaving Jamaica; and in the most unequivocal terms declared her repugnance to any matrimonial overtures. "Let me conjure you, my dear Sir," urged the apprehensive pleader, "to return to England, and to renew with me those endearing ties of an undivided duty and the purest gratitude. I seek to emulate my mother, but it shall be in first shewing that I am your child, and not as a wife. Oh, let me for a time be your own Rachel Cowley!"

The father's reply to this appeal to his heart restored Miss Cowley to her usual cheerfulness. He good-humouredly rallies her on the needless rhetoric she employed to restrain the ardours of a lover, apparently as little disposed to be shackled as her herself. "From the little I have seen of this young philoso-

pher," adds Mr. Cowley, " I believe he left his heart behind him ; for our notable mothers, who are nibbling at the prize, can make nothing of him, and the girls already call him the stoic. I was much amused the other day by Captain Vernon's and Mr. Flamall's debate, in which you were the subject of contention. The uncle insisted that his nephew had been engaged in taking a drawing from your picture whilst I was at Oliver's with a gay party of ladies and gentlemen, and from which young Philip had contrived to absent himself for a long time. Vernon doubted of this employment of the youngster's time ; ' but 'be this as it may,' added he, with his usual bluntness, ' I tell you that young Flint will never do for a suitor for Miss Cowley, whatever he may for her picture ; she would laugh at him.' Mr. Flamall was not much pleased by this frankness, and he coldly replied, that he presumed

Miss Cowley had not made a confession of her faith to Captain Vernon. 'There is no need she should,' answered he; 'her spirit and sense speak for themselves: and whilst all the world acknowledge her beauty, she shews them that she will not easily be won.' I shall spare my pen the labour of writing the remainder of his rhapsodies; but he finished by telling Flamall that he could recommend a wife to his nephew, who would exactly suit him; and that was Miss Lucy Hardcastle. His description of the young lady satisfied Flamall that the honest captain did not think his nephew undeserving of *a good wife*, though disqualified to manage *a saucy one*. I have, however, reason to believe I shall hear no more of Mr. Philip Flint's *passion* for Miss Rachel Cowley; therefore she may take one feather from vanity's plume."

Mr. Cowley finishes this letter by men-

tioning the steps he had taken preparatory to quitting the island; and, with much satisfaction, informs his daughter that he has retained Mr. Flamall as his agent: he enlarges on this gentleman's talents and capacity for business, and concludes with the highest eulogium on his manners and agreeable qualities.

It appears that the honourable veteran in the service of Neptune and Bacchus, delivered, as was usual, this packet and his sweetmeats, in person, at Heathcot, where he passed a few days with a young creature, who, from her birth, had shared in his warm heart an affection which he had carried to idolatry for her mother.

His account of his patron, Mr. Cowley, by no means tallied with the apparent ease and gaiety contained in the letters he brought; and Mr. Hardcastle was told that Mr. Cowley had been seized

with a fit whilst at Mr. Flint's table, which dreadfully alarmed all present: happily a medical gentleman was one of the guests, and immediate relief was given. "It has shaken him," added the captain; "but we hope he will rally again. I saw him the day I embarked; he made me promise not to say a word of this business to you; but I did not like his looks, and I thought he walked but poorly: God grant I may see him in my next trip! It should be the last labour of the Charlotte. She was launched to carry him and his angel wife to Jamaica; and if she swims safely till he is with his daughter, she will have been a lucky vessel to me." He passed his hand over his eyes, and whistled away an emotion that he could not otherwise conquer.

The captain's apprehensions were but too well founded. Mr. Cowley lived not

to reach England. A second and third attack of the palsy proved fatal; and poor Vernon found at his return many mourners to sympathize with him in a sorrow legitimately founded on his knowledge of the man, and on gratitude to his benefactor. We will pass over in silence the effects which this melancholy intelligence produced at Heathcot-Farm. Miss Cowley was roused from the deepest dejection of spirits by the events which succeeded to the first shock. Mr. Steadman summoned her and Mr. Hardcastle to London; and with precautions, which he judged necessary, placed before the orphan a copy of her late father's will, which, with all its requisite documents, had been formerly sent to him by the executor, Mr. Flamall.

The contents were, indeed, calculated to astonish and afflict his daughter. She was named as the successor to his fortune

in the usual terms. His property stood answerable, however, for the provision of his two natural children and their mother. These children were boys, the eldest not yet ten years old. To each was bequeathed five thousand pounds; to the mother three hundred pounds per annum. To the survivor of the boys this property devolved, unless the mother lived till the children had both reached twenty-one, in which case her annuity was to be divided between them. To Mrs. Allen two thousand pounds; bequests to some domestics, and hundred-pounds rings to several friends; amongst these Counsellor Steadman, Mr. Hardcastle, and Mr. Oliver Flint were named. Mr. Flamall, with a thousand pounds legacy, was named as the guardian of his two sons, and appointed agent for the trust of superintending his concerns in Jamaica. An income of five hundred pounds per annum was annexed to this trust; and provision

was made for Mr. Flamall's residence at whichever of the plantations he chose for his abode. The important clause next follows, and in these words nearly : " Having had the most unequivocal proofs of the integrity of those trustees named by Mrs. Dawson, for the security of her property in favour of Rachel Cowley, he still leaves to their wisdom the entire management of the trust in their hands ; but it behoved him to shew to the world, and to his daughter, that he had neither relinquished his rights as a parent, nor been unmindful of the duties annexed to the name of a father ; and, not doubting his child's ready obedience to his commands, he had, with the concurrence of the parties most nearly concerned, chosen her a husband in the person of Philip Flint, &c." On the celebration of this marriage Mr. Flamall's jurisdiction terminated, as far as it related to Miss Cowley. She was immediately to enter into

the full and unconditional enjoyment of her fortune when she became Mr. Philip Flint's wife.

The penalty of a refusal to comply with the terms thus briefly specified, was a minority, which reached to her twenty-fifth year; and in case she married any other man, save the aforesaid Philip Flint, without the consent of Mr. Flamall, the whole of the Jamaica property was tied up for her children's benefit; and in case of no issue, devolved to his two sons. He further enjoins his daughter's obedience to this *his representative*, even as it regards her place of residence: stipulating, however, that he has conditioned for her remaining in England, not only while she bears the name of Cowley, but also under that of Mrs. Flint, having received the most satisfactory assurances that Philip Flint will not live in Jamaica. In a word, Mr. Cowley's will firmly makes Mr. Flamall the sovereign arbitor of

Miss Cowley's fate till she becomes his niece; and the harsh and dictatorial language of the law was exhausted to sanction and confirm this excess of parental authority.

Miss Cowley, with indignation, pronounced the will a forgery; and she produced as evidence for this opinion her father's character, his unlimited affection for her, his confidence in Mr. Hardcastle, and his letters, in which Philip Flint had been named. Her friends admitted her reasoning, but the will was legally executed and witnessed by Oliver Flint, Mr. Cowley's *valet de chambre*, and two of the most respectable gentlemen in the island. Juba, the faithful Juba, had carried Rachel Cowley in his arms. He had long been a free man, and he had written the first letter to England of his beloved master's death; in which he dwelt with comfort on the calmness and

clearness of the deceased man's faculties till the last moment. She persisted in her opinion, and with great firmness said, she would seek redress in a court of Chancery, ordering the counsellor to enter a caveat to the will immediately. The dignity which she assumed, the acuteness of her observations, and the absence of those fears which the gentlemen were prepared to expect, gave them at once to understand that the client was not a minor in good sense. The counsellor was struck with a character so superior to what he expected in a girl not much more than eighteen; and he told her candidly, that his opinion and Mr. Hardcastle's entirely agreed with her own. "I have gained," continued he, "some information respecting this Flammall. He was, I find, one of those men who in the practice of the law are its disgrace; he is expert in all the tricks and

chicanery of his tribe; and your property is too valuable a trust to be wrested from him without a struggle on his part. The means of justice are slow, and we must contrive to counteract his villany, not to dispute his right to be *a villain*. Have patience, my dear Miss Cowley, I have more than once caught a rascal in his own toils. A false will cannot easily be produced without confederates; something may transpire, for rogues are rarely faithful to each other. Be satisfied that you are at liberty to refuse the husband he has so carefully provided for you. You want nothing from Jamaica, and in a few years you will be mistress of your father's fortune, and in a situation to support your brothers in their difficulties with a man certainly disqualified for their guardian. We will know more of him, and appear his dupes for a season; he will only rob you with the

more avidity from finding he is suspected."

Miss Cowley assented to this advice, and determined to be governed by her zealous friend; secretly hoping, that the restrictions of her father's will, to which she appeared disposed to submit, would at least secure her from the solicitations of lovers; and thus silence Mr. Hardcastle's scruples in regard to his son.

Before she left Mr. Steadman, she saw her formal rejection of Mr. Philip Flint dispatched to her new guardian. Counsellor Steadman wrote this letter, and Miss Cowley's attestation of its being dictated by her, satisfied her, that she had crushed the hopes of the insolent pretender to her hand. Her natural cheerfulness returned, and Lucy found her friend the better for the little jour-

ney. But this season of tranquillity lasted not many months ; a letter from Mr. Flamall, which it is necessary to transcribe here, will assign the cause of new anxieties at Heathcot-Farm. Mr. Flamall, who seemed to consider Mr. Steadman as the only friend of Miss Cowley, and, as a professional man, the proper medium through which his authority was to be announced to the heiress, thus writes to him :

“ Bound as I am by the duties of my appointed trust, and prompted by my veneration and gratitude to fulfil in every point Mr. Cowley’s intentions, as these related to his daughter, I think it proper to remove Miss Cowley from her present residence. From the period of Mrs. Hardcastle’s death, her father had this intention ; and I have frequently heard him regret, that his delay, and her reluctance to visit Jamaica, had post-

poned a resolution he thought indispensibly incumbent on him to execute. In his last illness he requested me to make it my first concern to place his daughter with a lady qualified to protect and guide her. I have, in consequence, written to my sister, Lady Maclairn, on this subject, and you will prepare my ward for her removal to Tarefield, the place of my sister's residence. I am not discouraged by Miss Cowley's refusal of my nephew. She does not know Philip Flint, who will, I am confident, convince her, and her friends, that her father was not less attentive to her happiness than to her fortune, in selecting him as her protector for life. More on this subject does not become me to say, less would be injustice to a man whose merits are acknowledged wherever he is known. I will not, however, pursue this subject further at present. than by observing, that Miss Cowley may be led by her knowledge

of Mr. Philip Flint's connections in England, to consider more favourably of her good father's *wishes*. In the mean time, my nephew has cheerfully acceded to *mine* ; and flatters himself, that by postponing his voyage to England for some months, he is not only gratifying Miss Cowley's delicacy in this hour of filial sorrow, but also offering her an homage which will not be unacceptable to her, as it will be of use to her interest ; Mr. Cowley's large concerns requiring an inspection, and an arrangement which, in the first pressure of business, is more than I am equal to. The retirement in which Sir Murdock Maclairn's family lives, will not, in the present state of affairs, be irksome to *my ward* ; the society of an accomplished woman will, I hope, compensate her for the temporary suspension of more unconfined amusements. Taking it for granted, that you will still hold the trust committed to you

by Mrs. Dawson's will, I shall annually remit to Sir Murdock Maclairn the same sum which Mr. Cowley assigned for his daughter's maintenance with Mr. Hardcastle, from the age *of infancy*. Being willing to shew my respect for Miss Cowley's wish, as this relates to Mrs. Allen's continuance in her service, I have prepared Lady Maclairn to receive what she might otherwise judge an useless appendage in a house regulated as Tarefield-hall is." Mr. Flamall concludes by informing his correspondent, that Miss Cowley's fortune is very ample; that he has to encounter the obstinacy of the boys' mother, who will not be parted from the children, nor suffer them to remain in their father's house. Mr. Philip Flint had, however, compromised matters; and the mother and children were placed by him in the family of a Mr. Dalrymple, a Scotchman, whom he had known at the university, in Edin-

burgh, and who kept a school in Kingston, with reputation. The boys were handsome, promising children; and he had no fears for them, but such as arose from the ignorance and excessive fondness of their mother, whom he always thought unworthy of the place she had held in Mr. Cowley's heart. It was, however, his intention to send the children to England for education, with his nephew, if he could prevail on the mother to consult their real good. Statements of effects in a general way, and details of his conduct, as regulated by the dying words of Mr. Cowley, in regard to the negroes on the plantations, to whom he had been a father, finish Mr. Flamall's letter.

Mr. Hardcastle, judging of the effects of this letter on Miss Cowley, from the sorrow with which it filled his anxious bosom, and justly apprehending the dan-

ger which might result from his "*child's*" removal to a family devoted to Mr. Flammall's views, strenuously concurred with Mr. Steadman, in advising Miss Cowley to take such steps as would at least secure her person from Mr. Flammall's controul. But she was not to be moved in her resolution of complying with his orders. "The future happiness of my life," said she, "depends on my compliance with this act of usurped authority. He will find," added she, with an air of triumph, "that in the hands of Providence the vilest instrument is made subservient to the purposes of mercy. I must quit Mr. Hardcastle's house; I have for some time *wished* to do so. Yes, I have wished it. I will convince that world which Mr. Hardcastle so much fears, that Rachel Cowley has not been influenced by those who have been her protectors, to prefer Horace Hardcastle for her future guardian. I will shew my independence, and maintain my claims to a choice which virtue

sanctions. It is of no moment where I pass this term of my banishment from all whom I love," continued she, melting into tears. "These people will soon discover, that I am not a girl to be trampled on, and their own advantage will secure to me civility. When I am five-and-twenty years of age, I presume the *world*, as well as the laws of my country, will deem me a free agent; and I should be the first to laugh at an attachment that could not stand my trial of its permanency. It is possible, that in the first instance Mr. Hardcastle's scruples will yield to his sorrow for my absence, and my own firmness, to some censures of his wisdom and circumspection; but we shall both find consolation in those principles which require the sacrifice of present security and happiness, to a more lasting and greater advantage." Mr. Hardcastle, unequal to the conflict, retired, not daring to trust his integrity with so irresistible a pleader.

Soon after, the following letter was in his hands; its contents will evince to the reader, the solicitude of Miss Cowley's friends at once to ascertain the safety of her removal from them.

" To Counsellor Steadman.

" Bishops-Auckland, Durham.

" MY DEAR FRIEND,

" My short residence in this part of the world, will unavoidably subject the intelligence you require to errors, notwithstanding my zeal and diligence. The truth is, that, as I have only the voice of the parish of Tarefield and its environs for my authorities, I am forced to place before you the history of a family at once peculiarly marked as the object of a fond partiality, and of inveterate

hatred. I leave to you to sift and resift the documents thus obtained: for my history includes a number of years and facts which are still the topics of conversation in this neighbourhood.

“Flamall was, as you have heard, for some years a practitioner in the law; and succeeded his father in the business of an attorney, with the credit which that father left him, who was an honest and an able man. His sister, now Lady Maclairn, was left to his direction, and, to the surprise of old Flamall's connections, to her brother's generosity. She was young and remarkably handsome, had been carefully and liberally educated, and was a virtuous and elegant young woman; but from some proofs of her brother's intentions, of making her subservient to his ambition or vices, she sheltered her own innocence by accepting the hand of old Mr. Flint, then in his seventieth year;

and in the full blaze of beauty, not being more than four or five and twenty, she appeared as a bride at Tarefield-hall. Mr. Flint at this period had four children. Oliver, his eldest son, was settled in Jamaica, had married there, and was the father of a family. Lucretia, the present despot at the hall, was single; but something older than the bride. Percival Flint, the second son, had just finished his academical studies, and had quitted Oxford. Mary Flint, the youngest of the family, was then about seventeen, and in one word, a *paragon of perfection*, for such my authorities proclaim her. Domestic feuds and discontents still kept their ground, in spite of the young mother-in-law; who, it appears, was little calculated to maintain even her own rights: she sunk into a nurse to her husband. Percival Flint left his father's house secretly, and for some years, whilst serving his country as an

officer in the marines, was supposed by the neighbourhood to have fallen a victim to misery. Mr. Flamall had an active part in all the transactions at this period. He was useful to the infirm father of the family, in managing his business; and his ill treatment of his own sister, gave him favour with Miss Lucretia Flint. Love now engaged in the struggle for power. A new curate, of the name of Howard, appeared at Tarefield. Miss Lucretia made love to him; and he made love to the beautiful Mary Flint. Here again I could fill volumes with the praises and blessings still given to this matchless pair! After many trials, and the utmost cruelty from the jealous sister, the lovers married. Mr. Flint's death is the next event. He left a will, which utterly excluded Percival Flint and Mrs. Howard, his darling child, from any portion of his property beyond a shilling. The Jamaica estate

became his eldest son's, and Miss Lucretia became the mistress of Tarefield-hall, with a large sum in money, some say, not less than thirty thousand pounds. The young widow had her provision of four hundred pounds per annum, for her life, on the Tarefield estate, and her name was not even in the will but in order to ascertain this claim. A new wonder succeeded to this. In a short time after the funeral, Mrs. Flint declared herself pregnant; and to the astonishment of every one, Miss Flint received the intelligence with joy, and observed, it was an event for which Mr. Flint had prepared her. She was happy; for it would now appear, that her father had chosen her for the stewardship of that fortune destined to be shared with a child who had not offended him. The odious title of mother-in-law was forgotten, and she called Mrs. Flint her *friend* and *sister*: by this *latter* appellation they still call each

other. Anxious for the preservation of the infant, Miss Flint removed her sister, whose health was in a very precarious state, to London. There Philip Flint was born; I need not add, that this posthumous child is the young man who pretends to Miss Cowley's hand. I have suppressed the affecting stories of Mr. and Mrs. Howard's difficulties, and their untimely death. They left a daughter, who is the idol of her parents' partial friends; till lately, she has lived with a wealthy farmer, where also boards her uncle Percival. She is now, I am told, noticed at the hall, and I believe she is under Miss Lucretia's protection. But to proceed.

“Soon after the birth of Philip, Mrs. Flint chose a second husband, and married Sir Murdock Maclairn, with whom she became acquainted during her residence in or near London. The baronet

was poor, and Mr. Flamall was for a time averse to this union; and for the reasons my Irishman assigns, namely, ‘that Flamall knew of no standard by which to appreciate honour and intrepidity.’ *Observe* here, that the Duke of —— gave me *this* observation, who formerly knew the baronet. Miss Flint, whose best actions are viewed only in one direction by the circle of her irritated judges, was however useful to the poor widow Flint on this occasion. The union was effected by her mediation, without an open rupture with the domineering brother. ‘But she took care of herself, for she wished to attach Mr. Flamall, and conditioned for Sir Murdock and his lady, living with her at Tarefield, by which means the lover had a pretence for his visits.’ I shall pass over this lady’s supposed frailty, and the motives assigned for her not marrying the man whom she favoured. These are

contained in the following hints: '*They knew one another too well for that folly, &c.*' I have even continued to suppress the current report of the hall being haunted by the unquiet spirit of old Mr. Flint, 'who knows the will produced, was never made by him.' Compassion for Lady Maclairn has not been worn out. Her conduct to her unfortunate husband during many years infirmity of mind, nearly approaching to insanity, has obliterated the remembrance of her neglect of Mr. and Mrs. Howard, and every one concurs in believing, that, to her love and unremitting tenderness, the poor baronet stands indebted for his present amendment in his health and faculties. She has one son by her second marriage. It is enough that I say this young man is the reigning favourite here; for 'Malcolm Maclairn is in no favour with Miss Flint, or his uncle Flamall. I suspect he has more of his father's blood

in his views than suits his dependant fortune ; for he has been from his childhood constantly attached to Percival Flint, and Miss Howard, the orphan child of Mary Flint, who is the admiration of the parish, and the cherished object of compassion.

“ It is no unpleasing nor unprofitable reflection, my good friend, to trace in my gleanings relative to this family, the pure and genuine love of justice with which the heart of man is endowed by his gracious Maker. Neither the wealth nor station of Miss Flint have been able to screen her from the odium of those about her. Percival Flint has more homage paid him than if lord of the manor-house ; and with the stipend annexed to an invalid captain of marines, a wooden leg, and his niece Howard in his hand, confers an honour on every cottage he enters. The farmer, at whose house they live,

has acquired an influence and authority in the parish beyond what his opulence would give him; 'for every thing has prospered with Mr. Wilson from the hour he sheltered Mr. and Mrs. Howard.' Such is the belief here.

"To conclude. It appears that Mr. Philip Flint has been carefully educated, and is a young man of spirit. The usual comments on him finish with, 'Aye he is too good for those to whom he belongs! they could not spoil him; but he will never be worthy to carry his brother Malcolm's shoes.' You will translate these expressions to this young man's advantage, for they bespeak his worth.

"Depend, however, on one thing as certain: Sir Murdock Maclairn is no fit instrument for cunning or baseness. His wife is an unoffending, depressed woman:

I am told she is highly accomplished. Miss Howard is now I find with her aunt Miss Lucretia. The captain occasionally visits the hall. The baronet is regaining his health; and Malcolm is a second Æneas. Whatever be the result of your measures, recollect that Miss Cowley is within my reach; and prepare her to expect a steady and vigilant protector

“In your sincere friend,

“GEORGE WOODLEY.”

CHAP III.

MR. Hardcastle read the above letter to his attentive hearer: he waited for some moments for her observations on its contents; but finding she remained silent, he said, "My dear child, recollect that you are not obliged to comply with Mr. Flamall's orders." "I have never for an instant supposed myself in his power," answered she calmly. "This account of his connections, however, gives me satisfaction, because it will serve to remove from your mind all fears for my personal safety. It is of no importance to me what are the characters of this Flamall's relations at present, it is

sufficient that they appear neither dangerous, nor interested in using me ill ; for the rest I am prepared." " Be also prepared to be just," replied Mr. Hardcastle. " Mr. Woodley says his information rests on public rumour and public opinion. Your father knew Mr Philip Flint and Mr. Flamall : suppose, for a minute only, that his will was the result of that knowledge, and that the man he recommends to your notice is one that is worthy of you ; without binding yourself to any conditions, you ought to see this young man whenever he arrives, and to listen dispassionately to whatever he has to plead, both for his honour and his pretensions. Consider him only as Oliver Flint's brother, and as standing remote from Mr. Flamall and the family at Tarefield. His affinity to worthless people, granting it be so, is no proof of his worthlessness ; and surely the estimation in which he is held even by your

father's report of him, entitles him to a fair hearing whenever he appears at Tarefield." "I shall, whenever that happens," replied Miss Cowley, "receive him without resentment or caprice, and soon convince him that my resolution is unalterable." "And what answer am I to make to this letter?" asked Mr. Hardcastle, producing a renewed application from a young baronet in the neighbourhood. "If you will have the goodness to transmit my answer to Sir George," replied Miss Cowley, "you will oblige me; it is a brief one: I am an engaged woman; and should not this silence him, he will prove that he is not a gentleman, nor a man of sense.—To what purpose should I conceal from him, or the world," added she, throwing her arms around Mr. Hardcastle's neck, "an attachment in which I glory? To what purpose refrain from telling my father, and my friend, that I love Horace Hardcastle?"

He knows that I love him, and have loved him for years." "My dear child!" said the subdued Mr. Hardcastle, tenderly returning her embrace, "endowed as you are, I would with pride acknowledge you as my daughter were you penniless; but circumstanced as I am, I dare not listen to your pleadings. I am too old, and too tenacious of a good name, to risk it by a compliance so evidently in favour of my son's fortune: and you are too young, and too inexperienced, to know whether that compliance would secure to you the happiness it promises. I will imitate you in frankness: regard me as your best friend, not as Horace's father. Leave to time the discussion of a subject of which you are at present disqualified to judge. Horace, like yourself, is young, I advise you to avoid entering into any engagements with him till more acquaintance with life shall have decided his character and rendered

you a better judge of his merit. Remember also, that should you persist in cherishing the sentiments you now entertain of this young man, that you cannot give to your friends any apology for your preference more ostensible, than that of placing no temptation in the way of his integrity. It will be the only wealth he can bring to the account of yours; and although many will say it is nothing in the scale they judge by, *some* will be candid enough to confess, that virtue knows no inequality of condition. But let me say yet a few words more," added he; "and think you are listening to your *mother*, to that being who trained you to be what you are."—He paused for a moment.—"She would tell you, my dear Rachel, that there is no period of a young woman's life, in which she is less qualified to judge for her own happiness, than the one in which you are at present. You are under an

influence which renders your judgment weak. Unacquainted with vice, and with all the affections of nature and innocence glowing in your bosom, you give to imagination an office with which it ought never to be trusted ; and to the lover it selects the qualities of your own pure heart. For a time, this delusion passes ; but what is often the conclusion ? Sometimes, a too late conviction that what had been cherished as a supreme *good*, is a certain *ruin* ; and still as frequently, that what had been called a permanent affection, is discovered to be nothing more than a flight of youthful inclination. I may surprise you by saying, that, without any imputation on your principles, or degradation of your understanding, you may cease to love Horace Hardcastle." "Never!" exclaimed the impatient Miss Cowley. "We are not the children of folly, nor the slaves of passion ! Read that letter

which I received from your son, and then judge of the basis on which our hopes rest. I have promised Horace to respect his father's honour, and to preserve his, and I will never write to him till I have your consent." "I am satisfied," answered Mr. Hardcastle, hastily rising to quit the room. "Oh hear me!" cried Miss Cowley; detaining him by his clothes: "as a *sister*, as to my *early friend*, surely now and then I may be indulged." "You shall want no information of his safety," answered the retreating Mr. Hardcastle, interrupting her and instantly retiring. "Inflexible man!" said she, bursting into tears. "Ah, would to Heaven that mother to whom he referred, lived to confute his arguments! She only knew Rachel Cowley—she only knew her Horace."

Relieved by this effusion of sorrow, her spirit took its natural bias, and

though disappointed in her wishes of gaining permission to write to her *brother* Horace, it may be at least conjectured, that the opposition she had been unable to conquer, did the lover no injury; for it is most certain, that she attributed Mr. Hardcastle's conduct to a pride and scrupulosity far removed from good sense, and deficient in kindness to her.

CHAP. IV.

MISS Cowley lost nothing of her firmness in relating the above conversation to her friend Lucy. "I must think Mr. Hardcastle too rigid," said she, "in prohibiting all correspondence between me and Horace; but I will obey him as my father. I leave you, my dear Lucy, but it is to defeat malice. The honour of Mr. Hardcastle is not less dear to me than my own, and I will prove to the world that I am qualified to judge, and to determine. I have now duties before me that will give solidity to my mind. My father has left two children besides myself, and convinced as I am, that Flamall is a villain, I will omit no

occasion of detecting his artifices. Sheltered under this roof, I can never do this; but by bending to his authority I may make him tremble. Should I fail in this purpose, I am still secure; for Horace will not want my father's wealth to make him happy; and when I am of age, it will depend on you to determine whether Mrs. Dawson's legacy to her grand-daughter is to be *a curse*." Poor Lucy, unable to reply, only wept, and saw with bitter regret her friend's preparations for leaving Heathcot. A letter from Sir Murdock Marlain hastened her departure; and Mrs. Allen and Miss Cowley were escorted to London by Mr. Hardcastle a few days previous to the baronet's arrival, and took up their temporary abode at Counsellor Steadman's.

Few of my readers will refuse their sympathy to the dejected and faithful

guardian during this anxious period. With a father's apprehensions, Mr. Hardcastle saw youth and beauty torn from his protecting care; and with anguish of soul, did he now contemplate the traits of his pupil's mind, and the charms of her person; but of this person no more will be said, than applying to Rachel Cowley the poet's interrogation,

Can Virgil's verse, can Raphael's touch impart,
Those finer features of the feeling heart,
Those tend'rer tints, that shun the careless eye,
And in the world's contagious circle die?

Rogers's Pleasures of Memory.

Having now brought my readers to the point in which my history may be said to commence, I hasten to place before them a correspondence, which will better serve my purpose than any talents I possess. I shall content myself

in future with supplying the few breaks I find in the narrative; and leave the reader to judge of my discernment in thinking the unstudied language of truth and nature better than any I could substitute in their place. Miss Cowley shall speak for herself.

LETTER I.

From Miss Cowley to Miss Hardcastle.

TAREFIELD, JUNE 24th.

THE short note which your father has, before this, delivered to you, and which I trust you have destroyed, my dear Lucy, as a proof unworthy to be preserved of your poor Rachel's little advancement in self-knowledge, shall, if it be possible, be rendered useful to me as a warning against presumption. But although I have been taught by experi-

ence not to think too highly of my wisdom, yet I mean not, Lucy, to give up the reins to folly. You will have no more despairing rhapsodies from me. The question has been decided, and reason tells me, that in a difficulty which admits of no other alternative but that of either laughing or crying, it is but to take that which will least disagree with my constitution. You have, my dear Lucy, called me many times a twin sister of my favourite Beatrice. Whether you meant to compliment me as having a portion of her wit, or meant to repress in me the superabundance of her spirit and flippancy, remains with you to settle. I am contented with the resemblance, and I will, if I can, preserve a light heart, and *her* disdain of fools and knaves. I will, however, effect my purpose of breaking through the web of mischief which now entangles me, without wishing "I were a man," or "eating

Mr. Flamall's heart in the market-place;" a more severe punishment will only satiate my vengeance. He shall *live* to feel the stings of a wounded conscience, and to see me *happy*.—But again Heathcot rises between me and my heroic intentions! Alas, my Lucy, it will, for a time at least, defeat every purpose of wisdom! I must weep! Its beloved inmates are before me! I see them silently glancing their humid eyes to my vacant place at their peaceful table; and, with looks of sympathy, pitying each other for the absence of their fondled, cherished Rachel. Who will now, my Lucy, defend you in your walks from the terrific cows? Who will now guard you from the wasp's approach? Who will now explore your path in your evening's ramble, and secure your timid footsteps from the tremendous frog? Alas! you have no Rachel Cowley to guard and to laugh at you! She is, and well may I

say, alas! and alas! far remote from these her accustomed and sweet duties! She is too remote, also, to hear the gentle and persuasive admonitions of her Lucy. Who is there *here* to repress with a smile my too volatile spirits, "to divert my pe-
tulance and check my pride?" Where am I now to seek that friend, whose approbation, like the dew from heaven, tempered my rough elements with her own simple and mild virtues? We were formed, Lucy, to be each other's aid and support. We are made for Heathcot and contentment. Will Mr. Hardcastle persist, think you, in thus defeating, as it appears to me, the designs of Providence? Oh no! nor can he long remain unconvinced that my father was incapable of defrauding his child of those rights of nature which he granted to his slaves. He cannot, Lucy, persist long in prohibiting Horace from writing to me. He must perceive the injustice, as well as

severity, of his present conduct. Never to write to the companion of my youth, to a *brother* endeared to me by a thousand and a thousand fond remembrances of pure and unimpassioned affection! Surely this is being too rigid! Such is not Mr. Hardcastle's mind. He will relent in compassion to himself. In this hope only can I find a relief from my present state of mind. I cannot, Lucy, support my plan of conduct with fortitude whilst I find your father thinks meanly of me; and is it not obvious, that he believes me weak and childish? Why am I not to be confided in? His honour is my own; Horace's disgrace would be my destruction; and, again I repeat it, I would not now marry your brother were the *world* your father so much dreads, to solicit me to be his wife. No, Lucy, Horace Hardcastle shall have no accounts to settle with my new *guardian*! Farewell, I cannot proceed. Mrs.

Allen's blessing and your Rachel's must not be omitted. She is contended with me, and bids me tell you that I am a very good girl. Will not this please you? You smile.

LETTER II.

Miss Cowley, in continuation.

TAREFIELD.

FINDING myself somewhat the wiser for a few hours repose, I will profit by the unavoidable delay of my yesterday's letter to add to its bulk, and to pour into your patient ear a larger portion of those thoughts which I know not what to do with till they are communicated to you. I shall therefore inform you, that I lost no time in giving Sir Murdock Maclairn a specimen of that damsel's *temper* whom it had cost him so many wearisome miles to seek. But I will be modest, and tell you also, that I had been spirited up to this

undertaking by Counsellor Steadman; for as he has no son to beguile me of my heart, and is too old himself to wish for more of it than he has, he was determined, without consulting your father, to see whether I could fight my own battles. Thus prepared, I asked the courteous baronet, before my dear counsellor, when he meant to commence his journey to Tarefield. A solemn bow prefaced his reply.—“He was at my directions on that point.”—“Indeed,” answered I, smiling, “you surprise me! I suspect my new guardian has ill-chosen you for his substitute. I fancy he would not altogether approve of your complaisance to your *prisoner*.” He fixed his eyes on my face, but was silent. “I mean not to bribe you,” continued I, “for you appear too indulgent to need it; but I do wish to make our journey to Tarefield pleasant; and that cannot be unless we travel as good friends. By a will now

substantiated as legal, and called *my father's will*, Sir Murdock, I am committed to the controul of a man, who, till within a few months, was a stranger to that parent I deplore, and to whose name and office was affixed a post at Mr. Cowley's writing-desk. It ought not to surprise you, therefore, if I think it necessary to act with *caution* under these circumstances. I am an entire stranger to Mr. Flamall's character and principles; and yet I am ready to accept of your house, Sir Murdock, as an asylum proper for me. But, understand me: motives absolutely remote from Mr. Flamall's power and authority over me, have induced me to give up a protection under which I have been safe and happy from my infancy. I trust to you *voluntarily*, for I believe you to be a man of honour. To Mr. Flamall I leave the provision he may judge necessary for his *master's daughter* whilst under your roof. If I am to give

credit to my partial friends, I am not capricious; but I am very jealous of my independence. Lady Maclairn, as well as yourself, Sir Murdock, must be told that I have *decidedly and firmly refused the husband* provided for me by my father's will. I expect to be exempted from all importunities on the subject of Mr. Philip Flint. These would not only tend to make my residence with you unpleasant, but also short; for I shall without delay convince Mr. Flamall that Rachel Cowley's person is not included in his *extraordinary* trust. I have only to add, that I am ready to set out whenever you please, and shall with cheerfulness attend you to an abode which I promise not to disturb by any discontents."

Sir Murdock, who had not for an *instant* taken his eyes off me, started when I ceased speaking, and for *several* moments

appeared extremely agitated; his countenance varied with the oppression within, and he paced the room once or twice in profound silence. At length, with collected firmness, he said, I had surprised him. "I am not prepared to answer Miss Cowley's suspicions of Mr. Flamall," said he, addressing the counsellor, "but I know that I have had no sinister views in coming hither. I have no designs either on her person or property; nor can I easily conceive that Mr. Flamall has. We were strangers till very lately, to all that regards this young lady. The proposed alliance was transmitted to us, as an argument in favour of the plan now under consideration. It produced the effect Mr. Flamall wished, it conquered our reluctance to receiving under our roof a stranger to our habits of life. These are so retired, that we naturally judged they could not be agreeable to a young lady; and we

should have persisted in our refusal, had not Mr. Flamall pointed out to us the propriety of the measure he recommended. "If Miss Cowley, or Miss Cowley's friends, be not satisfied with what I have asserted," added he, spreading his hand on his chest and colouring, "I would not for all the riches in the world have her under my protection; but I have yet to learn, that Sir *Murdock Maclairn* has been judged a fit agent for dishonour!" His eyes were again turned on me, they instantly softened, and I saw he trembled. "Say no more, my good Sir," cried I with my usual eagerness, and taking his hand, "I bless Providence for conducting me to you, under the necessity which forces me to quit Heathcot. I will love Lady Maclairn for *your sake*, and tell her, that I am grateful to you for hearing me with so much patience." Never shall I forget him, Lucy, when with a countenance expressive of the utmost

sensibility, he said to Counsellor Steadman with solemnity—"She will be safe as the child of my bosom. She will be guarded by a vigilance equal to your own and Mr. Hardcastle's. As a deposit sent by Heaven, I will receive her." Do you know that I was so affected that I wept, and repented of having urged him to this explanation. Mr. Steadman assured him, that he was perfectly satisfied, and the conversation gradually became less interesting. I mentioned with diffidence my friend Mrs. Allen. "My wife will rejoice to find you bring a companion with you," said he; "she fears that you will think Tarefield very dull. My bad health has produced a love of home in her, as well as myself, that will not easily be overcome." "Be under no fears on that head," observed I, smiling, "I am one of those profound philosophers who are never alone." He smiled in his turn at my vivacity. "You

will like my wife, Miss Cowley," said he, "she is the gentlest and the best of women. One so peaceable, that she will not quarrel with you for your barbarity to her son. I am not yet at home," added he with more cheerfulness, "therefore not yet *tongue-tied*; but permit me to assure you, that Philip Flint is not undeserving of your good opinion, though he may be too presumptuous in his hopes. I have, however, nothing to do with this affair," continued he; "having from his cradle strictly adhered to one rule of conduct, namely, that of leaving him to his tender mother's care, and the direction of his more immediate connections. Happily his education has not been neglected. But I was unequal to the duties of a father, even to *my own Malcolm*." His poor head mechanically sunk, and he took, greedily, three or four pinches of Scotch snuff. We finished by settling the hour of our departure;

for I found he wished to leave London.

My next letter shall place before you more particularly this *interesting* Sir Murdock Maclairn, the originality of whose person and manners has so powerfully excited my compassion and curiosity, that I cannot but bless fortune for throwing him in my way. He is no common character, Lucy ; and the peculiar sadness which from moment to moment pervades his countenance, is to me inexpressibly touching. I should have detested a stupid laughing face for *le compagnon du voyage*, that conveyed me from *my Heathcot* ; and as the next best thing to being happy oneself, is making others so, I forgot in my endeavours to make Sir Murdock comfortable that every milestone was to me a *memento mori*. It is yet rather problematical, whether I shall like his lady as well as I

do him. But I know not how it happens, that I am less disposed to fall in love with my own sex than with the other. I have loved, dearly loved, men old enough for my *great-great-grand-father*, but rarely have I been attached to *old ladies*. Must we acknowledge the truth, Lucy? We may as well; the poet has spoken it: "most women have no characters at all." So farewell, and be sure to love even the follies of your own Rachel Cowley, for they are not borrowed, at least, my dear girl. Supply for me kind words to Sedley.

LETTER III.

From the same to the same.

YOUR father's wisdom in hurrying you away to Barton-lodge, instead of permitting you to remain at Heathcot,

like another Niobe, dissolving in tears, is so like him, that it neither surprises me nor Mrs. Allen; and if the cheerful mistress of the most cheerful mansion contentment ever found, cannot comfort you, I shall be angry and chide my Lucy.

You tell me your father smiles, and refers you "to Rachel's pen" for all that relates to Sir Murdock Maclairn's first interview in town; "*he* (Mr. Hardcastle) being too jealous of the baronet's favour with me, to be impartial." In reply to Mr. Hardcastle I make him one of my best and most saucy curtesies; and tell him that I understand perfectly the cause of his *discretion* and *humility*. He is like many other sinners, willing to compromise matters with conscience, and to tempt others to do that which he dare not do himself, in order to share the

gratification of wickedness at a less price. How often have we seen him check his mirth and spoil a good story, by saying, "this is folly, neither the weaknesses nor the frailties of our fellow-creatures, my children, are proper subjects for mirth:" and yet he can lay a snare for me. However, I have neither his charity nor benevolent toleration, and think folly fair game. But I have not folly to laugh at, in the subject before me; yet, Lucy, in the dearth of all rational amusement, in a separation from all whom I love, do you think I can want an excuse for my pen, should it offend charity? Self-preservation is a duty no less obligatory than self-government; and as I am cut off from the banquet of wisdom, have I not a right to cater for myself? "Certainly:" and if I can live upon worse fare, and can be contented with what is wholesome, though not delicate, will any one blame me? "No:" well then, this privilege

being granted, please to understand, that neither my compassion nor good nature are yet starved out; for were that the case, Sir Murdock Maclairn would be the most unsuitable dish for the cravings of my hunger. It is, however, most assuredly true, that this gentleman's first appearance produced on me not only surprise, but the most powerful incitements to be *wicked*. Figure to yourself a very tall large-boned man, meagre as " pining atrophy ;" high cheek-bones, which still more hollowed his sunk features; a complexion jaundiced by sickness and tinged by Scotch snuff, which he takes in immoderate quantities; a long crane neck, which is tightly bound with a narrow black stock; a few scattered hairs, which still maintain their caroty colour, tyed in a queue; a sunk, though broad chest, and a plaintive voice, in which however are cadences to please the ear whilst attending to an ar-

ticulation slow, and sometimes laboured. Add to this picture, an abstracted manner, and an air of sadness; and you will not be astonished that I should for a few minutes fancy Malvolio present, and that I looked for "his yellow stockings and cross garters." The eagerness with which he gazed upon me strengthened my imagination, and I did not dare to smile, lest I should hear him say—

"Thou canst not chuse but know who I am:
If thou entertainest my love, let it appear by thy
smiling.—
Thy smiles become thee well."

At this moment my eyes encountered those of Sir Murdock's, and my heart smote me; for in language more touching than sounds of harmony could impart, they said, "Pity me, for I am the child of sorrow; respect me, for I am acquainted with grief." I blushed, and forgot Malvolio.

For several days, however, I could not reconcile myself to the *keenness* and peculiar attention with which these large blue eyes surveyed me. An expression in them of a famished look (I cannot better define its eagerness) yielded, as he continued to gaze on my face, to a melancholy softness, not unfrequently heightened by a tear; but I found that he was subject to an absence of mind, which it appears has resulted from many years bad health and low spirits. This, with his ceremonious demeanour, and the no inconsiderable degree of his national accent, render him peculiarly singular. Not expecting much amusement on the road with a companion to whom you may speak half a score times before he is sensible you expect an answer, I took care to provide myself with a book; and, by chance, I robbed the counsellor of Macpherson's *Ossian*. The united libraries of the ancient and modern world,

could not have better supplied me with an author calculated to rouse the attention of Sir Murdock. I was tempted to read aloud some passages, and he listened with a feeling that surprised me by the sorrows of Malvina. "Have you never read Ossian?" asked I. "If I have," replied he, "I have forgotten him during an indisposition that left me nothing but a capacity to feel my own wretchedness." A deep sigh and the depression of his head silenced me. He soon urged me for more of my book; but I was grieved that I had introduced to his acquaintance a work so powerfully calculated to "awaken fancy, and to touch the heart" of the poor baronet.

I cannot describe to you the enthusiastic bursts of feeling and admiration which followed every sublime passage I selected; and his tears flowed to the pathetic touches of the poet. "I will read

no more to you," said I, with good humour and closing the book: "Ossian is, to a mind like yours, a bad writer." "There is a joy in grief, when peace dwells in the breast of the mourner," answered he in a plaintive tone. "It may be so," replied I, "but the mourner ought to remember, 'that sorrow wastes him.'" "I do not attribute my faintness to grief," observed Mrs. Allen laughing, "but to downright hunger; and I must beg to stop at the next stage for something more substantial than Ossian." Sir Murdock instantly began his apology for his omission at the last inn. "I forgot," said he, "that every one could not like myself fast twenty-four hours without inconvenience. Early habit has made abstemiousness of no account with me," added he, "I have fasted six-and-thirty hours formerly, without experiencing any considerable diminution of strength." "Have you never thought

such a disregard to the wants of nature pernicious?" asked I, surveying with compassion his lank figure. "I had then other cares," answered he; "my soul, like that of Oithana, was not as careless as the sea which lifts its blue waves to every wind, and rolls beneath the storm." He fixed his eyes on my face, and spoke no more till we reached our destined post-house. Here Mrs. Allen's orders were quickly obeyed, and we pressed him to take some refreshment with us; and to judge by the voraciousness of his appetite, he must have exceeded his usual time of fasting. We were, however, too well pleased with the effects of ham and cold chicken on him, as well as on ourselves, to trust to his memory for a repetition of the cordial; and Mrs. Allen undertook the management of us for the remainder of the journey. The replenished baronet became more and more conversible as we

proceeded. He had even transient gleams of cheerfulness, and finding that I persisted in keeping back the "tales of the times of old," till he, like other poor mortals, eat three meals a day, he contented himself, and amused us by describing in glowing colours the grand and picturesque scenery he remembered in the western isles of his beloved Scotland; and with evident delight he traced a similarity of manners and customs between his country and ancient Greece, marking with precision the common features of resemblance that had struck him between the heroes of Ossian and Homer. From this learned dissertation he condescended to talk of France, in which country he had passed his youth. He praised my accent, and seemed pleased that I knew the language, speaking with rapture some passages from Racine. "Do you also understand Italian?" asked he. I replied, "*As a school-girl.*" He

smiled most graciously—I wish you could see him smile, Lucy! and with a suppressed sigh he said, “It may serve to fill up your time, my dear Miss Cowley, to accept of the assistance of ‘*a school-boy*’ in this language; there was a time, when it was as familiar to me as my mother tongue, or the French; but my memory has been many years *lost* to me as a source of pleasure. A reverie succeeded to this observation, and Mrs. Allen and I insensibly retraced our steps and got to Heathcot-Farm. We talked of Lucy Hardcastle; when, to our surprise, the good baronet interrupted us by observing, that our friends at Heathcot had an advantage of which it was probable they were not aware. “Heathcot,” added he mournfully, “will never recede from your mind whilst you are at Tarefield.—This is my fear: yet still I think you will be pleased with my Harriet. She is as gentle and pure-hearted as your

dear Lucy. She will be miserable, if she fail in making you comfortable." You will supply our answer. He continued to talk of his wife, and told us, that to her persuasions he had yielded reluctantly to undertake a journey which had separated him from her more hours, than for many years before he had been minutes: "but she thought," added he, "that it would be beneficial to my health and spirits; and these are of value to me, because essential to her happiness." He spoke with animation of her faithful love, and added, "She is now counting the hours till she sees me."

When arrived within five miles of Durham we left the road, and pursued our way through a flat country, unmarked by any thing cheerful; and reached Tarefield-hall at about eight o'clock in the evening of our third day's journey. The house, as we approached it, struck me

as having been originally built in that style of architecture for which we are indebted to William the III. and Dutch taste; but as each successive proprietor conceived his own to be as good, and had money for its indulgence, it exhibits at present samples of all: turrets and chimneys: high roofs and flat ones; latticed bows and Venetian windows, and wings added to wings.

I find, however, many good-sized rooms within; and when we get acquainted with the five staircases, and as many thresholds, we shall, I believe, have seen all that is curious in the manor-house, commonly called Tarefield-hall. I must not, however, omit as its beauty, a noble avenue of elms and horse-chestnuts, the latter in full bloom, and which embellishes the dull scenery around. This avenue is flanked on each side by a rising plantation of some extent, and is

devoted to modern improvement; the walks are neat and trim, and it is filled with shrubs.

Now mark me, Lucy: here I am at Tarefield; and here does my history finish, unless you are good and tractable. Horace was not even named in your last letter.—This will not do. You had better not provoke me: I have rich materials before me, but I will have my price for them. Take in the mean time the kiss of peace from your

RACHEL COWLEY.

 CHAR. V.

 LETTER IV.

From the same to the same.

YOUR dear letter, in which I find you *can be reasonable* and good, was delivered to me yesterday, by a gentleman who lives in this neighbourhood; the Mr. Woodley, our Counsellor's correspondent. He is, I find, land-steward to the Duke —, and resides at Bishop's-Auckland, the nearest market town from hence. He was frank and cordial in his offers of service, and we soon settled our terms of amity. He will be our post-master, and from this time you may

swell your budget at your pleasure, and send it to Counsellor Steadman's. Our servants will carry mine to Mr. Woodley's, for we have daily intercourse with the market.

But now for your reward. It shall be ample, for I wish to encourage young beginners; and being positively convinced myself, that you may, without breaking any one commandment in the decalogue, fill a page with intelligence relative to my *brother* Horace, I do hope to convert you, and strengthen your faith in my tenets. A mistaken and punctilious observance of an injunction, which your father's *fears*, rather than his *reason*, have given you, would be downright sinning against friendship; so "look to your ways and be wise."

It was evident, that some ceremony

had been judged necessary for the reception of the heiress; and I was received with much form and some parade in the *best parlour*. But as nature had not been consulted in these arrangements, she chose to spoil them; for poor lady Maclairn, instead of remembering her compliments, rushed into her husband's arms and wept. It was no longer *Malvolio*, Lucy! No; it was the toil-worn *Ulysses* soothing his faithful Penelope. The picture was complete; for an old spaniel was licking his feet at the moment. I cannot take a more favourable time for giving you a sketch of Lady Maclairn's person; for whilst her beautiful, black eyes were still humid with tears of joy, and her delicate face suffused with the mixed emotions of contentment and a recollection of her neglect of the strangers, I forgot she was Flamall's sister.

I should judge Lady Maclairn to be nearly fifty years old; she is of the middle size and elegantly formed. Her beauty is of that sort which I have heard called *pure English*; namely, hair approaching to black, black eyes, and a complexion of the finest texture and colour. Her features are small and regular. She is extremely pale, but not with the hue of sickness; and it behoves Lady Maclairn to think aright, for every feeling of her mind is accompanied by a soft blush on her face. This, with a certain timidity and peculiar gentleness of manners, renders her appearance more feminine and youthful than matronly; yet she is graceful, and speaks with propriety and judgment. So far my conscience acquits me of malice.

She had no sooner finished her fluttered welcome, than she presented to me the Brobdignagian, Miss Lucretia Flint,

who, in a stiff green damask gown and petticoat, might have conveyed to a soberer imagination than mine the idea of a mountain clothed in the livery of spring; but on raising my eyes to measure its elevation, a stern countenance of "Burdoth's" sort intercepted my curiosity, and I caught only a glimpse of its snowy summit. She condescended to bend, and offered me her glowing cheek, which I approached with fear and trembling. In order to recover myself, I begged Sir Murdock to introduce me to his son, who had modestly kept at a distance. He made his bow; and we began to chat on the little occurrences of the journey. "You must have found it very tiresome," observed the stately Miss Flint, fixing her eyes on the contented baronet, "I am sure I have pitied you, Miss Cowley." "Pitied me!" repeated I, with an air of astonishment, "I wished our journey had been as long

again! and could Sir Murdock have forgotten the road to Tarefield, I would have kidnapped him, and made the tour of England." The saver of links and torches was silenced, and I talked with Malcolm Maclairn of a country and a route which he appeared to know perfectly.

Miss Flint at length with much gravity asked how long we should have to wait for supper. Mrs. Allen requested permission to retire to her room before it was served, pleading a slight sense of fatigue. The courteous mistress of the mansion accompanied us to the destined apartments, and with the utmost solicitude for Mrs. Allen's accommodation, urged her to have a maid-servant to assist her. This she declined; and I returned to the family party with her ladyship, well knowing that Mrs. Allen's *whim*, not the *headach*, was at the bottom of the business; for she will have it that

the spoiled child does not sleep unless she places the pillow.

Malcolm Maclairn is the image of his mother ; but he is glowing with health, and his manly countenance is embrowned by air and exercise : I do not believe that Sidney's Arcadia has a handsomer shepherd than this village beau.

In a few minutes my attention was called from Malcolm, by the appearance of a beautiful apparition, which gliding softly by me, told Lady Maclairn that supper was served. She was retreating with the same light foot, when she hesitated, and courtesying to Sir Murdock, she said with gentle accents, she was rejoiced to see him. "Thank you, my dear Mary," was his laconic reply, at the same time taking her hand. As the beautiful phantom passed me, she blushed, and quickened her pace. "Good

Heavens!" cried I, "why, Sir Murdock, how has it happened that you did not prepare me for the sight of that angelic creature, now gone out of the room! I I never beheld so lovely a girl!" "She is indeed, a very beautiful creature," answered Lady Maclairn in an under-toned voice. "She is Miss Flint's niece, and lives with her here." We moved to the supping room; and I eagerly looked for the niece, recollecting Mr. Woodley's history. "Do we not wait for the young lady?" asked I. "Oh, dear no," answered Miss Flint, commencing with a hot lobster, "Mary does not sup with us." Malcolm pursed up his rosy lips, as if to whistle, and his knuckles gave the tune of "The Babes in the Wood." I became tired in a minute, and as *dry* as the dry toast I swallowed. Willing to reserve my petulant humour for this ungracious aunt's sole use, I retired to my room as soon as the cloth was removed.

I found, as I had suspected, the indefatigable Mrs. Allen still engaged in arranging her *pet's* clothes. Before I could begin my lecture she eagerly asked me whether I had seen Miss Flint's orphan niece. "I never was more ashamed of a mistake in my life," pursued she; "but after you left me I began to unpack what I knew you would want in the morning. A maid-servant entered to take my orders for supper; she mentioned several things, but I requested a sandwich and a glass of table beer: these were brought and placed on the table. Some little time after, some one tapped at the door, and the prettiest girl I ever saw in my life entered with a small waiter, on which was a tart and some cream. "I have ventured to intrude, Madam," said she, "in the hopes that you may be induced to add something to your supper." She glanced her eyes to the sandwich, which had remained un-

touched. "Permit me to assist you," added she, placing her dainties on the table, "let me try to uncord that box whilst you take some refreshment." Thinking from her dress that she was a domestic, I complied and sat down to eat my supper: during this interval I looked at her with admiration; which soon changed to pity, when I saw how delicate she was, and what hands I had employed. "I beg," said I, "you will cut the cord, you seem no more equal to it than myself. You are not strong, my poor child; your labours, I trust are light here." She blushed, and her sweet eyes filled with tears. "My feebleness is a misfortune," replied she, "which I owe in part to the tenderness with which I was reared. I lament it, although my station in this family imposes no labour on me: I am Miss Flint's niece." I made a thousand excuses. "Indeed, Madam, you have given no offence," said she,

wiping her eyes. "On the contrary, I envy the condition of those in every class of life, who are able to fill up usefully that station to which Providence calls them; too much care, too much tenderness have, I fear, unfitted me for mine." She again dissolved into tears. "I should not have said thus much," added she, "for I have nothing to regret, but being a burden to my relations. Your residence here, however, would soon inform you that Mary Howard lost every thing at the death of her mother."

"My dear young lady," answered I, endeavouring to sooth her, and now observing that she wore a black cotton gown, "you must not despair; your loss has probably been recent; time will do" — She interrupted me. "Oh, no!" cried she. The chamber door opened, and the chamber-maid hastily said, "My dear Mary, you forget how time goes;

your aunt will be enquiring." The poor girl took the friendly hint and hastily withdrew. I now employed the maid to untie the trunk, and, with my praise of Miss Howard, mentioned something of my error. "No wonder," said she, with honest indignation, "dressed as she is! But she is Mr. Howard's child for all that, and would be so in rags. Such relations! say I: I would weed in a ditch rather than owe my bread to such." A bell sounded, and the girl withdrew, saying, "You will soon see, Madam, that I am right."

"Good God!" continued the anxious Mrs. Allen, "what will you do, my dear child, in a house where a *niece* envies the condition of a servant, and where a servant is kinder treated than an *aunt*?" "Do!" replied I, "why I will make those who are in it *blush*." She shook her head, and I took it into mine that she

had not met with proper deference. The storm of passion was rising, Lucy; but I was pacified by Mrs. Allen's assurance that she had not been overlooked, and I found there had been no difference made in the accommodations prepared for the heiress and her *friend*. It was well; for, is she not my friend? Did not my dying mother give me to her? Did not yours bid me cherish her? and when I fail, may Heaven abandon me! Let these people dare to be impertinent, you will soon see us at Heathcot; at present, however, my anger flows only in one channel. My first employment here shall be to teach Miss Flint a lesson, and to shew her that Rachel Cowley abhors oppression.

I will finish this three day's journal by sending you a description of the damsel for whom I mean to draw *my sword* should it be necessary; you will say it has an edge; so much the better when employed to correct cruelty.

In stature, Miss Howard is about my height, but in symmetry and proportion of form, so completely Grecian that you must look for her model in the gallery at Florence. To perfect the resemblance the more, she wears her light-brown locks, nearly flaxen, braided up and fastened round her head, whilst a black ribband confines the redundancy of the ringlets from covering her snowy forehead; her eyes are the darkest blue I ever saw, and, perhaps, to their colour it is owing that I never yet saw eyes so expressive at once of spirit and softness: at one moment they make their appeal to the heart by the imploring look of infant-trust and confidence; at another, they bespeak a soul within, equal to the duty of checking insolence; but these emanations are transient, and a melancholy expression of tenderness, rather than of sorrow, more commonly beams from them. To what shall I liken her

complexion? I can find nothing but a white rose newly refreshed by the dew of heaven: its delicate smoothness and modest blush exactly correspond with Mary's skin; for its tints would confound the painter to imitate; her smile would convert frenzy to peace, though lost on Miss Flint's flinty heart; and her voice would soften the tigress when robbed of her young.

I know what you will say: "This is a sketch in Rachel Cowley's style, when compassion guides her pencil. It is a thousand to one that this poor girl is any thing more than a pretty one; her youth and depressed fortune have lent their aid to an imagination that always employs vivid colours. We must place Miss Howard's picture by the side of Miss Flint's." Do so, Lucy; the time may come, and I hope will come, when you

shall recant, and the triumph of truth
shall be that of your

RACHEL COWLEY.

LETTER V.

From the same to the same.

WITHOUT entering into your comments on the power of bribery when in such hands as mine, I will content myself with my influence over an affection which can be just to friendship and yet faithful to duty. I appeal to your understanding, Lucy; has there been one wish to render your good offices hurtful to your father, or pernicious to Horace and myself, yet offered to ensnare you? I have a right to hear of his welfare; and by detailing the little occurrences which mark our respective existences, you are

doing no harm." Your conditions are accepted with joy, as the means of producing comfort to my *brother*. You shall have my day-journals, and night-journals, if you will; my very dreams shall be sent you. Ah! would to Heaven you could give me Horace's!

To begin, however, with your "*method*." My first night's repose at Tarefield was disturbed by Mary Howard's image and my own fretfulness. The dawn of day presented to my sight Solomon, in his judgment-seat, who grinned upon me with an aspect not less savage than that of the two viragoes who held the sprawling boy between them; for, sooth to say, no one could have traced the mother's features, or the clemency of the judge in the mass of worsted employed; and I believe the face of the lions that decorated the ascent to

the throne, was the common one for the whole multitude of countenances that filled the room. Weary of looking at this odious tapestry, I arose, and explored my way into the garden. Here, indeed, I found the sweet perfumes of nature and the god of day; but for the rest let the poet speak—

“Grove nods at grove, each alley has a brother,
And half the platform just reflects the other;
The suffering eye inverted Nature sees,
Trees cut as statues, statues cut as trees.”

This being too much in the style of the tapestry in the bed-chamber, soon tired me; and seeing the servants about, I sauntered into the avenue. Here the horse-chesnut trees, in all their pride, attracted my attention for a few minutes; but I was soon allured towards an object still more inviting. Mary was before me, walking with the light-foot of a Dryad, and your not inactive friend bounded

after her. Exercise and surprise heightened the vermillion in her cheek, and with a sweet and graceful modesty she saluted me with the usual compliments. I gave the reins to my heart, and it was not idle. She said I was very good; that indeed it would greatly enhance to her the pleasure of walking in a morning if she were *permitted* to attend me, but her aunt frequently wanted her services. She would, however, endeavour to gain an hour sometimes, for the honour of walking with me. A certain trepidation and looking on all sides marked some fear; and I was on the point of encouraging more confidence, when we saw the baronet approaching us. He was wrapped up in an old plaid morning gown, his head enveloped in a black silk cap, and his attention was engaged by clearing a tattered silk sash from the interposing brambles. He started on seeing me, and would, I believe, have retracted

had not my voice detained him. On accosting him his poor sallow face was in confusion, and with a forced smile he asked me whether he had not frightened me, glancing his eyes to his uncouth habiliments. I took his arm, and rattled over some account of my having frightened Miss Howard. He became easy and cheerful, and told me that Mary and he had very often an assignation to keep in the avenue at too early an hour for the business of the toilet. The turret clock sounded eight, and Mary left us. You may suppose she became the subject of our conversation. "She is," said he, "as faultless in mind as in person; my wife says she is the image of her mother's pure and now beatified soul; but that she is also like her father, not only in her person, but in a firmness of character which her mother wanted. Her parents were unfortunate," continued he, with his usual depression of voice and head

when afflicted. “ She is in the hands of an aunt who hated them ; a woman naturally harsh and violent. We cannot controul her power, without danger to ourselves ; but we suffer deeply from being the witnesses of this poor girl’s mortifications. My wife, Miss Cowley, is a mother ; her son Philip is Miss Flint’s favourite ; she has called him *her heir* from her cradle, and she has exacted in return from his mother, a submission which has annihilated even the wish of being independent. She is gentle, humane, and unambitious, but she is—a slave——! These domestic grievances will not long escape your observation. I am passive ; for my Harriet wishes me not to interfere. I only dread lest you should despise us.” “ Be assured, Sir Murdock,” answered I with seriousness, “ that this fear is groundless ; I am more disposed to pity than to blame. As a stranger I remarked Miss Flint’s ungracious and

petulant manner, and I honestly confess I pitied *her*. She might yet be corrected ; a little wholesome contradiction is all that is necessary." " You have only to try an easier experiment," replied he, smiling, " and you will succeed by only engaging to marry her idol." " Were I but privileged," answered I, " you should see her perfectly tamed by my employing nothing more than her own arts of tormenting. I doubt not but in the first instance *her idol*, as you call her young brother, secured his power in this way." " Indeed you are mistaken," said he, " Philip Flint was ever mindful of his own honour, though grateful for an affection, unbounded in its liberality to him."

Lady Maclairn's appearance prevented more. She came to summons us to breakfast, and with the utmost frankness told me that she had been to pay her respects to Mrs. Allen, who was very busy with

her band-boxes, and had ordered a breakfast and a maid-servant into her apartment. She conducted me, whilst chatting, to the "Old Wing," in which Miss Flint more particularly holds her state; and we found her richly decorated, and waiting for us at a tea-board most splendidly set out. Sir Murdock had mechanically, I suspect, followed our steps, and entered the room with us. Miss Lucretia's face flushed a deeper dye. "Good God, Sir Murdock!" exclaimed she, you are enough to frighten one in *that trim*." "Did I frighten you?" asked he in a plaintive tone, and with a look which would have softened any Flint but the one before him. He was retreating. "I will have no infringement of our treaty of amity," cried I gaily, and gently placing him on the sofa beside me. "It is my turn to frighten you to-morrow morning, by shewing myself in my wrapping gown

and night-cap. We have nothing to do with ceremony and constraint: let those have it who fancy they are never dressed without white-fingered gloves." I glanced my saucy eyes on Miss Flint's starched muslins; she perceived the application, but I was *en train*; and affecting to be hungry, I took a roll and divided it between my silent neighbour and myself; and finding Lady Maclairn was to preside at the silver tea-board, I impatiently begged a cup of chocolate. Then, with well-counterfeited recollection, I said, "But where is Miss Howard? she is better entitled to her breakfast than I am, for she was walking before me." Mary does not breakfast with me," replied Miss Flint, "she has it in her own room." "I am glad I have so good a precedent to produce for my humour," answered I, "though it deprives me of present pleasure; I also usually breakfast in my own room, for I regard an hour

in the morning as the most precious in the day. But as a stranger," added I, smiling, "may I presume to ask when, and at what hour, I may hope to see this beautiful creature? Does she dine also in her own room?" This question was answered with much haughtiness. "As a stranger, Miss Cowley," said she gravely, "it may *surprise* you, to find so near a relation of mine under restrictions which I *deem* proper. Mary knows my views; these extend no farther than to make her useful, and to qualify her for the station in life which the imprudent conduct of her parents has destined her to fill. She must be humble. "Besides," continued she, relaxing into more civility, "your praises of her beauty quite alarm me, and would turn her silly head. She is young, and vain and silly enough to think herself a very pretty girl." "Why, my dear Madam," asked I, "laughing at the extreme gravity of this remark,

“how in the name of common sense, can Miss Howard think otherwise of a face and a person so exquisitely formed, and so consonant to every idea she can have of beauty and grace?” “Oh, as to that point,” answered she with a toss of her head, “she will soon discover, if her pride do not stand in her way, “that beauty is all fancy, and the face she worships may not be thought worth a second look by another.” “I grant,” answered I, “the justness of your observation in a general way: I know that our ideas of beauty are in many instances local, and depend on taste; I will do more, I will grant, that in many parts of the habitable globe Miss Howard’s personal charms might be regarded as *deformities*: but as she is in a country which secures her from any competition with flat-nosed, long-eared, and black-skinned beauties, I do not see how you can prevent her knowing that she is peculiarly

endowed with those external advantages, to which her situation and the acknowledged taste and opinion of those around her, have given the power of attraction and the tribute of admiration." "You may say what you will," replied Miss Lucretia, with an asperity of tone in unison with her harsh features;" but I wish from my soul this poor girl had no beauty. We have had enough of that perishable commodity in our family! Besides," added she, softening her voice, "you appear to have overlooked a lesson which every handsome girl ought to know. I have heard many *sensible men*, Miss Cowley, observe, that the best sauce for the relish of beauty, is the *ignorance* which the possessor has of its power to call forth admiration, or to attract notice and favour." "I should have told 'your sensible men,'" replied I, "that I well knew the taste for 'Moliere's Agnes' was not yet worn out.

Ignorance is more friendly to the sensualist than to the moralist; and I always suspect those who wish to see a young woman unconscious of her own advantages. It is also, in my opinion, illiberal, and unjust to conclude that a woman is vain because she is handsome. A weak understanding has, in numberless instances, given to even ugly and deformed women a conceit of themselves, which is as pitiable as it is ridiculous; and we see them daily exhibiting faces and persons with the most entire persuasion of their being attractive, which excite only disgust and ill-natured animadversions. No, no, Madam," continued I, "beauty does not of necessity make a woman a fool; a plain understanding and a very little experience will teach her to appreciate it justly; but she will, and she ought to bring it into that account of gratitude she owes to her Maker; for it is a good gift, inasmuch as it renders

us pleasing in the eyes of our fellow-creatures, and conciliates that affection which would otherwise be languid and careless."

The baronet had not apparently given his attention to one word of this conversation, for though his eyes were fixed on me, he seemed totally absorbed in his own reflexions. "You have not listened to this debate, my dear Sir Murdock," observed his wife, pressing his passive hand, "otherwise I would call upon you as umpire between the contending parties." "You are mistaken," answered he smiling, "I have not lost a syllable of what has passed, and my decision is ready. No adventitious advantages will engender conceit or vanity in a mind that has solidity, and that rests upon those principles which alone can bestow *real excellence* and produce *permanent esteem*. But I am curious to know by what means Miss Cowley has acquired the wisdom to estimate so justly an

advantage which it must be confessed, with her face and at her age, one would not have expected.”—“I will convince you,” replied I with gravity, “that if I am not vain, it is because I am proud. I was educated by a woman, who, to good sense, joined every virtue that adorns the female character. Her example, as much as her precepts, contributed to form me: and such was her influence, that to resemble Mrs. Hardcastle was the purpose of my life, even before I was qualified to judge of her merit, or to measure the ascent I had to gain in my approaches to her perfections. Mrs. Hardcastle was a handsome woman; but she was neither vain nor affected. Yet I will confess, I wished to be as handsome as Mrs. Hardcastle, who was indeed a beautiful woman; for I particularly noticed the consideration her elegant person produced before strangers. But a lesson, which I still remember, checked, it may

be, the vanity of the girl. I was, when about twelve or thirteen years old, one morning alone with my mother, as I called Mrs. Hardcastle, when our reading was interrupted by the visit of a neighbouring gentleman, who had however been some months on a tour. No sooner had he received the frank and easy welcome of Mrs. Hardcastle, than he examined me; and with the most elaborate praise spoke of my improvement, growth, and *extraordinary beauty*. During these commendations, which, although they made me blush, did not offend me, my maternal friend was good humouredly caressing his dog, which was a very ugly cur. "You have not lost your enthusiasm for beauty I perceive," observed she smiling. "But what is become of your pretty Italian grey-hound? and how happens it that her post is filled up by this miserable looking animal?" "I would not give that dog," replied he,

“for an hundred Italian grey-hounds, each more beautiful than Fidèle. She was not worth the keeping, except as a plaything to my little nephew: but this dog has qualities which are inestimable.” Mrs. Hardcastle laughed, and turning towards me said, with that sweetness which so distinguished her, “You see, my dear girl, the *worth of beauty* when unfriended by *useful talents*: remember poor Fidèle, and take heed to be something better than a play-thing for a *school-boy*.” I did not forget this lesson, and it was the more useful to me, from finding, in the gentleman’s subsequent visits, that whether it was a piece of old china, a tulip, or a young lady’s eyes or complexion, he was equally liberal of his praise, and employed much the same language. I was therefore offended by his encomiums; and I am become so proud and fastidious on this point, that I always think the compliments paid to my per-

son, include a sarcasm on my understanding."

"All this argues nothing against my opinion," said the inflexible virgin. "With your understanding, beauty may not be a dangerous gift, but in ninety and nine instances out of a hundred it is so, and leads the possessor into danger." "So you may say of health, of spirits, of intellectual endowments, nay, even of life itself," replied I; "for each in its turn is abused by the folly and passions of a mind unchecked, and uncultivated. But our neglect of a blessing does not lessen the value of the gift; and for my part, were I in your place, I would recommend to Miss Howard, in the enumeration of those mercies she owes to her Maker, *gratitude* for a form and a face which open to her every bosom in which humanity resides."—"You ought to be very pious indeed," replied she, with an air of pique, "for most assuredly there is no compa-

risson between your beauty and Mary's. She has a pretty baby-face"——"For charity's sake stop there," cried I, "I am contented with my face at present, but I do not know what your comparison may produce. I think it too good a one to be mended by cold cream or Spanish wool; and I know it is too honest a one for a deceitful heart. As a good title page I am thankful for it, and I will take heed that the work within shall not disgrace it, when read by the eye of truth."

What, my Lucy, could occasion the deep blush which suffused Lady Mac-lairn's countenance when I said this, merely with a view to finish a conversation I was weary of, and which detained me from going to Mrs. Allen? I had risen from my seat whilst speaking, and saw a tear escape from her eye. Would a mind unacquainted with guilt have felt so random a dart? I know what will be

your answer. However, it was evident I had touched a sensitive plant; and my retreat was necessary. I reminded the baronet of his promise to assist me in arranging our books, without any diminution of my gaiety. "Do with me what you please," replied he, "so that I am not in your way: but shall I not surprise Mrs. Allen by my appearance?" He glanced his eyes to his tattered gown, "We will run the hazard," said I, passing my arm through his, "for it is ten to one but she is in her night-cap, and chiding my idleness." He smiled. Lucy, I would you could see this man's countenance when thus lightened up! Surely, never did Heaven more graciously decorate the face of woe! It is with an expression, which not only awakens compassion, but which also produces reverence."

As I had foreseen, Mrs. Allen had made our task light. It was well she

had ; for to say the truth, the baronet was so entirely engaged by Humphrey Clinker as to forget his office altogether. Lady Maclairn soon after found Mrs. Allen and myself busily engaged in our work. She with alacrity assisted us, and, with a look of sweet and composed tranquillity directed to her husband, she said, in a half whisper, “ Are you aware, my dear Miss Cowley, that I am incurring a debt which I can never pay ? Heaven, who appears to have commissioned you to heal the broken-in-spirit, can alone recompense you. But you will know more of the being you will save ; and you will understand that my gratitude must need language, for I have not words that can express my feelings.” She pressed my hand with fervour. “ What will you say,” continued she, “ when I tell you that he has been inquiring after his turning-wheel, and talking to me of renewing an em-

ployment in which he formerly delighted ! You are the spring of his activity ; he means to make you a reading-desk. Are not these blessed indications of his amendment ?” I found no difficulty, Lucy, in translating Lady Maclairn’s language or expression while she was thus speaking. She loves her husband. *Time*, your grand specific, will settle my opinions as they relate to this lady ; in the meanwhile, I cannot well account for her secret in making me like and dislike her by turns. Sometimes she appears the most artless and ingenuous of her sex ; her conversation becomes animated, and her thoughts flow with a frankness as unpremeditated as your giddy Rachel’s. The next hour I see her, she is silent and ceremonious, conceding to all that is done, tremblingly alive to all that is said. To-day she offended me at dinner. Miss Flint sharply reprimanded her niece, for not being in the room before the last bell rang.

The innocent creature mildly said, she had been in the garden with Sir Murdock, who had detained her. Why was Lady Maclairn silent? Ought she not to have checked Miss Flint in the display of an ill humour, for which the cause was so trifling? I wish to see more of a decided protection in her manner to this poor girl. Her civility does not content me, and I sometimes fancy there is a *servility* in her observances, that marks a little mind.

I have well earned my promised recompence. I shall expect a long detail of Horace's adventures by sea and land: if you fail, farewell to your gossiping historian,

RACHEL COWLEY.

CHAP VI.

LETTER VI.

From the same to the same.

SINCE my last, I have had some conversation with Mr. Malcolm Maclairn, which, as it interested me, will make the subject of my present lucubrations. He returned home last night from an excursion which almost immediately followed my arrival here. I met him this morning in the garden, and he joined me. After civilly apologizing for an absence from home so soon after I was his mother's guest, he said, his father had not been for many years in a state of health

which admitted of any interruption by business. "But," added he, with seriousness, "with what satisfaction do I now devote my time to his ease and comfort, when I compare his present condition with the sufferings of his mind that I have witnessed ! This morning he was not only curious to learn the success of my little journey, but conversed with me on the subject of it with precision and interest. In time his long habits of seclusion and indolence will yield to the natural energy of his character, and the activity of his mind. I have cherished this hope, Miss Cowley, from the hour I was capable of reflecting on the nature and operations of my father's malady. I never could believe he was what he was called, nor that his case was incurable lunacy. The event has justified my opinion. After many years of suffering under the most afflicting hypochondriacal attacks, he was suddenly seized by a

violent fever, which for many days baffled medicine, and repressed every hope; the crisis was favourable. We were prepared to expect not only extreme weakness in his bodily powers, but also that debility of mind which inseparably belongs to a state of nearly renovated existence. He remained for a time a mere infant; but we perceived that with his increasing strength, his mind was clear from those gloomy images which had so long obscured it. He continued to gain strength; but unfortunately his memory, too faithful for his advantage, represented the scenes which had passed. He became painfully susceptible to a sense of humiliation the most unfriendly to his perfect recovery. No arguments could prevail on him to appear, even before the servants of the family, for a considerable time, lest he should terrify them; and his persuasion was so strong that he was disqualified to appear in society,

that my dear mother ceased to importune him on the subject. Unsupported, and I may add, friendless as we are on the side of connections, no efforts were made to combat opinions which were more the result of extreme delicacy and habitual indulgence, than of a still disturbed imagination. I was convinced that my father wanted only a stimulus sufficiently powerful to rouse his mind, and to recover his native powers of acting. About this time, we received Mr. Flammall's letters, with his plan of your becoming an inmate at the hall. My father was extremely averse to the proposal. He affectingly drew a picture of himself, and with tears appealed to his wife to determine whether he was a fit object for the observation of a girl who had no acquaintance with misery, and who would shun him as an object of dread and disgust, or laugh at his eccentricities. Miss Flint's wishes were an-

swered with firmness. 'He should quit Tarefield.' I had arguments more potent.—Let it suffice for the present," continued Malcolm with emotion, "that *I know Mr. Flamall*; and that my father knows him to be a villain. I urged, and seriously urged, that by his rejection of the proposal Flamall had made, you might fall into less honourable hands; that he might, by an apparent acquiescence circumvent designs, which, as originating in a mind devoid of every principle, must be liable to suspicion. 'You may not,' added I, 'be able altogether to redress the grievances which this young lady will have to endure under the controul of such a guardian; but under your protection she will be secure. Convince Miss Flint, and let Mr. Flamall understand, that you are no longer the 'idiot,' 'the lunatic,' they have proclaimed, At no period of his life was Sir Murdock Maclairn better qualified to

become the defender of innocence. My arguments prevailed, and his journey to London to receive you, was determined on. My poor mother's spirits sunk into terror. She resolved to attend Sir Murdock, and urged with many tears, the danger of his going by himself; but I was resolute. It was indispensibly requisite to renew in my father's mind a confidence in his own strength, and to permit him experimentally to feel that he was a rational being, and fully competent to the care of himself and of you. He departed alone; and with a solicitude and terror which I will not attempt to describe. I followed his carriage. I had the comfort of finding on the road, that although the singularity of his manners excited curiosity, no one called in question his faculties of action, or suspected he had been deranged. I lodged at the same coffee-house in which he did, and slept in the next room to him. I

followed his footsteps, and watched his return from Counsellor Steadman's by means of a young man who was in his office. From this gentleman I also learned, Madam, some particulars relative to your situation at Mr. Hardcastle's, and, with this information to appreciate justly your character, and that of the friends from whom you were to be separated. I reached the hall not more than two hours before your arrival, with the unpleasant conviction on my spirits, that you would experience under its roof many privations of your accustomed enjoyments. But I also knew, that nothing would be omitted on my mother's part to render your banishment from your friends as easy and as secure as possible. —This mother," continued Malcolm, "you must love; for she merits your esteem, and you are just. No language I can employ can describe her conduct as a wife or a mother. Judge then of her grati-

tude to you, for the humane and delicate attention you give to a husband, for whose sake and for whose comfort she has lived! You will no longer be surprised, my dear Madam, by the singularities of Sir Murdock, or at the retirement in which we live.—Observe those grated windows,” continued Malcolm, directing my notice to two in the attics, “in that apartment did my mother, like an angel of peace administer every tender, soothing balm to the desponding and disturbed imagination of her beloved, idolized husband! There it was, Madam, that I perceived from time to time the emanations of a mind which neither sickness nor sorrow could entirely extinguish. There it was, that I saw the spirit of a Maclairn struggling with affliction, and nobly sustaining its claims to the meed of virtue!”—He spoke with an animation which “proved his affinity to his father.”—“Need I,” pursued he,

“recommend to Miss Cowley the continuance of those acts of kindness which have already produced the most flattering hopes to my dejected mother’s spirits. She tells me Sir Murdock delights in your society, and that he talks of you as a blessing sent to comfort her, and to heal him.”

“God Almighty grant it may prove so!” said I, with fervour. “To be an agent in such a work would make a prison pleasant to me! But I find nothing at Tarefield,” added I, “to put my philosophy to the trial. I am perfectly contented in my banishment, except on one point; and I bespeak your good offices, Mr. Maclairn, to remedy this grievance. Contrive to conquer Miss Flint’s dread of my being an improper associate for her niece. From the precautions that are used, I should have thought those grated windows to have been poor Miss Howard’s boundaries.”—“She is another of my dear mother’s cares,” replied Mal-

colm with eagerness—"But see, Lady Maclairn approaches." He bowed and turned towards the gate, whilst I quickened my steps to meet her Ladyship. "I come a petitioner," said she with cheerfulness; "my husband wants to see you, and to have your recommendation of another book. I dread lest he should become too importunate; but only give me a hint, and I will prevent his intruding." "Let me at once," answered I, taking her hand, "tell you, in unequivocal language, that my enjoyments at Tarefield are so dependent on Sir Murdock, that *I* shall have no spirits, but in proportion as I find myself useful to the return of *his*. From the first day we met, I promised that we should be mutually useful to each other. He shall teach me wisdom, and in requital I will endeavour to cure him of his indolence." "God will reward you!" said her Ladyship, with emotion.—"The endeavour alone," answered I, "will be a recom-

pence; yet I am on the point of shewing you I can be selfish. I entreat you to assure Miss Flint that I am a very harmless young woman, and that she may with safety permit her niece to be familiar with me.”—“Would to Heaven,” said she, “it was in my power, Miss Cowley, not only to oblige you in this request, but also to convince you of my own opinions, as they relate to this amiable girl! But I can only deplore her aunt’s harshness of temper. I have neither the authority nor the influence necessary to remedy the evil. Lucretia must be left to the bitter experience which will result from her temper; and Miss Howard must be satisfied with knowing, that she is not the only one under this roof who suffers from its caprices. I am this poor girl’s friend, but I cannot lessen the oppression under which she lives, although I abhor it.” The Baronet appeared, and I thought his wife was not displeased by the relief his presence brought her. He gladly ac-

cepted my invitation to breakfast, and it was no sooner finished than he became so engaged with a book as to resemble a statue.

You say you do not yet know where to find me, should you be favoured with the gift of the renowned *Puss and her Boots*, and take it into your head to *step* from Heathcot to Tarefield. Conceiving that, in the fancy of the moment, your imagination had conquered the difficulty of the staircases and thresholds, I will in my turn, fancy you are now in my *domicile*. My apartment forms the south wing of this irregular building, in which are two specious parlours, which command the east and south, by which means I have the avenue and the garden for my solace. But on discovering that Lady Maclairn had, from indulgence, a more peculiar privilege in the appropriation of these rooms to her own use, I have insisted on their being regarded as *hers*;

and I have erected my throne of independence on the second floor, where the rooms are correspondent, only divided into three. It is in the south room you must look for your Rachel Cowley : but you may, if it please you, imagine you are still at home ; for all in this *sanctum sanctorum* is *Heathcot*. My work-table, the drawings we did together, Horace's biographical chart—*all* present to my mind those

“ Friends of reason, and my guides of youth,
Whose language breath'd the eloquence of truth ;
Whose life beyond preceptive wisdom taught,
The wise in conduct, and the pure in thought.”

To gratify Sir Murdock, who by no means relished my preference of the second floor for my domain, I have placed my books and the piano-forte in one of the parlours, which has wonderfully demesticated us to that room. He is too well bred to intrude on my private hours ; but he often induces me to shorten them, for there is a

pleasure which belongs to sympathy; and when I see the poor baronet's eyes brighten at my approach, I feel the gaiety which I often assume, settling into contentment. Have I said enough to satisfy your curiosity? Will it not be my own fault if I am dissatisfied with a prison regulated by order and neatness, and inhabited by people who wish to make it pleasant? I promise you, Lucy, that I will be all you wish me to be; but I must have intelligence of our dear wanderer. Neither Tarefield-hall, nor *Heathcot* itself, would content me, without this indulgence; and, to say the truth, I would rather be the "Wet sea-boy" in Lord William's yacht, "even when the visitation of the winds takes the billows by the top," than dwell in a terrestrial paradise. But this is the romance of a girl! and as Solomon, from the next room, is glaring his large eyes on me, I will profit from the admonition they give me, and

close this letter and my own eyes for the night. Heaven will, in its mercy, receive the petition I offer for all that is dear to Rachel Cowley, for in that confidence do I live.

P. S. Mrs. Allen bids me tell you that she finds Tarefield has a worse report than it deserves. It is haunted only by *one* unquiet spirit, and that may be said of nine hundred and ninety-nine houses out of a thousand. She has, by her usual address, found the means of quieting this nuisance as it approaches her; for Miss Flint affects to have a great veneration for Mrs. Allen's judgment, particularly in physic, in which she is or seems to be an adept. I heartily wish she may be converted to Mrs. Allen's creed, of being "good to all," it would do more for her weak *nerves*—could you but see this woman!—than a [course of valerian and bark.

LETTER VII.

From the same to the same.

OBEDIENCE in most cases is the best test of love ; and as you *command* me, my Lucy, to continue faithfully to detail all the *minutiæ* of my domestic comforts, till you are certain I want only you, I will continue to please you. In time you will, I presume, wish for other subjects ; and I beg you will point out to me the means of attaining any more important than my present one. What think you of my studying heraldry, for the purpose of amusing you ? I should have a good preceptor in Sir Murdock ; he frequently descants very learnedly on armorial bearings, and with much philosophical precision traces the influence of "*blude*," from the father to the son, for centuries past. According to Sir Murdock's favourite hypothesis, every cardinal virtue depends on having "*gude blude*" in our

veins; but a truce with nonsense. I believe the good people I am with will please me in all essential points. They have already forgotten that I am a *stranger*. Miss Flint has put aside her damask gown and laced suit, and I saw her this morning walking in the garden, in a *dishabille* not far removed from dirty negligence. By the way, the baronet now exhibits a new wrapping gown with Morocco slippers; and as we walk before breakfast, he usually continues to take that *répast* in the parlour with us. This hour is gradually becoming useful to him, and his wife also, for she appears to enjoy it as much as he does. I am now convinced that I have innocently occasioned to Miss Howard the privation of her morning exercise. I caught a glimpse of her to-day in the garden, and instantly availing myself of the opportunity, took a direction which led me to her. When remote from the windows, I at

once entered upon the subject of my fears, and told her that I had been vexed and disappointed by not seeing her in the avenue. "I must not abridge you of liberty," added I, "and unless your aunt becomes more reasonable, I shall lose my temper. What can be the humour she gratifies by opposing my wish to enjoy your society?" The poor girl was confused.—"You are very kind, Madam," replied she, "but my situation here does not admit of the honour you wish to confer on me. I have to learn many things, and my time is necessarily engaged by my duties. I have unfortunately been reared with too much tenderness for the station of life to which Providence has destined me, and it is sometimes difficult for me to forget."—She could not proceed.—"Say rather," observed I with indignation, "that it is difficult for you to bear, unmoved, a cruelty which disgraces your

aunt, and will destroy you.”—“ Indeed,” answered she, with an alarm which surprised me, “ your generous nature and sympathising temper have misled you. My aunt is not cruel: she thinks I want a discipline to fit me for the world and a low condition of fortune. Perhaps she judges right. In the mean time, I would not, on any account, give her room to imagine that I am discontented or ungrateful for the shelter she affords my helpless youth. But I must leave you,” added she, whilst her eyes swam in tears. “ I have walked an hour, and my aunt likes to see me exact.” You will believe that this short interview was not the *exact* preparation I needed for the scene I witnessed at dinner. Her aunt actually sent her from table with the soup and beef, neither of which she had tasted, because she had not done her allotted task. God, I hope, will forgive me for the thought that half choaked

me, and which would have finally choaked Miss Lucretia, had it been successful. I was so angry with Lady Maclairn, that I believe she perceived it; for nothing escapes her observation. After dinner we were by ourselves; and, in the most unqualified terms, I noticed Miss Flint's want of humanity and good manners to a girl whom she was bound to treat as a daughter. "I am astonished at your forbearance," added I; "for these instances of her unfeeling temper put me into a fever."—"You are mistaken," answered she with seriousness, "if you suppose I suffer the less for being patient. I am as sensible as you can be of the improper treatment Miss Howard has to support: but I know I am more effectually serving her by being silent, than I could be by opposing her aunt. You know not this woman so well as I do; nor the necessity which forces me to witness her harshness and severity to

this sweet and innocent girl. I must be passive, Miss Cowley. Yet there is a fault in Mary. She has been taught to dread Miss Flint. She is too much under the impressions given to her mind when with her uncle, to perceive that there is in Lucretia's temper a jealousy in regard to the affections of those about her. With less timidity, and more apparent contentment, she would remove from her aunt's mind the suspicion which interposes between her niece and every act of kindness her natural generosity would prompt. She believes Mary detests her."—"Good Heaven!" cried I, "she must so believe, for her conscience accuses her of deserving to be hated!—But, you say, Mary has been taught to dread this aunt. Are Miss Flint's *tender mercies* calculated to rectify her opinions? And would you wish to see a girl at *her age* practise an address which would contaminate the rectitude of a mind at

any age, in order to gain favour, and to sleep and eat in peace? I should see this girl trampled upon without pity, were I to see her for one moment smile and *lick* the hand which oppresses her!"—"Ah, my dear Miss Cowley," replied the agitated Lady Maclairn, "in this sentiment are contained the genuine feelings of nature, and the language of an untried spirit. May you never know the pressure of those circumstances in life which leave the principle vigorous, and fetter down the power of exerting it!"

Miss Howard entered the room. Her eyes were red with weeping. She brought Miss Flint's request that we would take our tea in her apartment. In the humour I was in, I would as soon have paid a visit to a felon in Newgate! I sent my negative, and left the room abruptly. You will perceive that your Rachel Cowley had lost sight of wisdom. Tell me not, Lucy, that I am an enthusiast:

I will maintain, to my dying day, that there is language which hypocrisy can never speak. Lady Maclairn is a *Flamm*! not one line in her face corresponded with a feeling of mine. I told my tale to Mrs. Allen.—What a contrast! The glow of indignation, the look of pity, with which she listened to my story, made me thankful that a slight cold had kept her in her room at the dining hour.

I had scarcely recovered my *sang froid* before Lady Maclairn, with a countenance as placid and gentle as the pleased infant's, entered to *chat*, and enquire about the rebel tooth which had teased Mrs. Allen; and, with a calm and easy good humour, she asked my permission for Sir Murdock's visit. "I am going," added she, smiling, "to bring Miss Flint into good humour; and if I should be so fortunate as to succeed, Mary shall have a holiday and walk with you." I

could only bow: but in spite of nature this woman subdued me; for she checked a sigh that I could not resist, and left me, to send in my guest. Sir Murdock finding I was “at home,” joined me; and, to smooth my own ruffled features, and gratify him, I went to the harp. I have however, prescribed for myself as well as my patient; the *penseroso* in music having more than once betrayed him into tears and myself into sadness, by sounds which came

——“o’er his ear like the sweet south
That breathes upon a bank of violets.”

Two or three songs of Horace’s are now locked up; and the baronet is contented with being roused to cheerfulness by Scotch ballads.

Let me know in your next letter how many months Rachel Cowley has been at Tarefield. Mrs. Allen’s calendar says

not more than one—can this be true? Poor Horace! how tedious must be to him the account of time if he computes it as I do! How many precious hours which Providence has given us, have been, and will be still lost to the account of happiness!—A happiness, Lucy, which would not have interfered with a single duty, nor invaded on the rights of a single human being!—Good night!

Well, I will be good, and endeavour to be patient. I will eat, and drink, and sleep, and forget not only my own cares, but cease to feel and be angry at the sight of oppressed innocence. I will grow fat, and say with Miss Flint and her tribe, “What! are not the poor and friendless made for our use?” I will do any thing rather than grieve my Lucy; but you have, my dear girl, your whims and crotchets to correct, as well as I my petulancies and opinions to govern.

What has given you the notion that I am starved at Tarefield? Please to understand that Miss Flint prides herself on the goodness and abundance of her table; and although she has not yet acquired a relish for a dinner of herbs seasoned by love and peace, she has an excellent appetite for the stalled ox. Consequently, as the song says,

“ Each day has the spit and the pot,
With plenty of pudding and pie.”

Therefore be assured, that if to “pine all the day is my lot,” it is not because I am hungry or ill fed. No, no: it is the sovereign will of Miss Lucretia Flint, that there should be no want of any thing at Tarefield but *contentment*; and as she can live without it, why should not others?

Yesterday morning Mrs. Allen and myself, escorted by the baronet, encountered Malcolm in our ramble before

breakfast. He was in rustic attire, and had a scythe slung on his shoulder. He joined us with a face glowing with health and exercise; and with the utmost cheerfulness accosting us, he said he had been working two hours in the meadow. "It is not remote," added he, "and if you love nature's perfumes, Miss Cowley, I advise you to lengthen your walk. You will find the poets need not the aid of fiction to heighten their description of a *hay-field*, whatever they may do in describing hay-makers. Were I poetically decorated, I would offer you my arm, but in this trim."——I interrupted him by bidding him lead the way, and be content without rivaling a birth-night beau.

We soon reached the field, in which were, with a number of people at work, the proprietor, farmer Wilson, a neat comely looking man, and Captain Percival Flint. They advanced to meet us;

but I perceived an instantaneous change in the baronet's countenance, and I thought the salutation between the captain and him more ceremonies than cordial. Sir Murdock, however, introduced him to us; and then, with a forced smile, he asked him why he had so long deserted the Hall. The captain said he was sorry he had understood the family to be too much engaged to admit intruders, as it had prevented his visit of congratulation on his return home; and that he had himself been on an excursion for some time since that period. Sir Murdock's brow cleared, he gave his hand,—“You must be more neighbourly,” said he, “and help us to reconcile the retirement of this village to these ladies.” He bowed, and I began to talk of Miss Howard. I finished my panegyric with an assumed complaint of her idleness, and begged he would come to the hall, were it for no other purpose than to exert his authority

and oblige her to walk out. "She used to be fond of walking," replied he pensively; "but the want of a companion of her own age, has, I fear, depressed her spirits and activity."—"Probably," answered I; "but only second me and I will engage she shall forget cross-stitch and meditation in a month." He smiled, whilst a deep sigh escaped him. I know your reverence for a black coat, Lucy, and this predilection will not, with you, be disgraced by a prudish prejudice against a red coat. With me a bare suit of regimentals, unspotted by the wearer's conduct, and unsullied by time and inattention, are credentials I must respect. The neatness of this veteran son of Mars, marked with me the gentleman; and I lost no time in my observations. He is even now too fair for a hero; but the fortune of war has indented a scar over his left eye-brow, which gives manliness, if not dignity, to his countenance; for it

certainly lessens the effects of a mild expression, and apparent want of health, by no means corresponding with a military man: a wooden leg, however, it must be allowed, does, and the captain's fame as a soldier has reached the village, where he is regarded with admiration and respect; but his manners are so placid and gentle, that I could not help fancying a cross and a rosary would have converted his portrait into the interesting and war-subdued hermit. So leaving you to finish this sketch, either as an anchorite, or a half-pay captain of marines, I shall continue to inform you of the impression which his past interview with me has left. We were such good friends before we parted that I ventured to tell him, that the sight of a military beau was a phenomenon which had not entered into my calculation of the pleasures to be found at Tarefield, and that his appearance had put my prudence and discretion

quite off their guard, insomuch, that I dared to make an assignation with him for the evening. "You cannot, as a soldier," added I, "refuse my challenge; but I warn you I shall bring into the field a *second*, in the person of Mary Howard." He laughed, and replied with gaiety and gallantry, that he accepted my terms, although the time had been, when he should have conditioned for *others*; but that I might depend on his punctuality.

On our return home I mentioned this arrangement to my companions. Sir Murdock, delighted with his morning walk, said he would be of the evening party; but instantly recollecting the difficulty of my engagement, he asked me, by what stratagem I intended to free the poor captive Mary from her cage. I was not quite prepared with an answer to this question; and could only reply,

that I trusted to fortune and my own ingenuity for success.

The gaiety of the baronet amply indemnified Lady Maclairn for having waited for her breakfast. She was treated with the detail of our walk and with quotations from Thompson's seasons; and with the contentedness of the hour, and a good appetite, he rallied me on my advances to the captain, telling his wife of the appointed rendezvous, and of my plot to reach Captain Flint's heart by means of his niece. Would you could see Lady Maclairn in moments like these! Why have I not Ithuriel's spear? For nothing less potent can reach the genuine features of this woman's mind! This morning, for example, she was ingenuous and unconstrained, her sweet eyes contemplating with delight the cheerfulness of Sir Murdock, when in a moment I saw her countenance change, and her eyes cast downwards, from the effects of these

words : “ My Harriot, you must be of our party ; you must intercede for poor Mary.”—“ You know it is not in my power,” answered she, with evident distress. Sir Murdock’s gaiety sunk in an instant ; but I interposed my influence, and with assumed spirits said, I would trust to no one for the deliverance of Mary but myself ; and that I had already formed my plan of action. Do you not think Lady Maclairn is somewhat obliged to her guest for these timely helps ? I suspect she feels her obligations of this sort sometimes too sensibly.

But to return from this digression. I need not tell you that from the first hour I entered into this house, I took care to mark with a *decided* precision, my absolute independence, in respect to Miss Flint’s will and pleasure. In every compliance, in every act, I have shewn her, that I look to Sir Murdock and Lady Maclairn as the regulators of my con-

duct, and as the heads of the house. But I found it was necessary either to declare open war with Miss Lucretia on the occasion before me, or to try her ladyship's mode of *bending* to the despot. The lesson was a new one, and I felt an inclination to make an attempt in the art of flattery. So prepared, I met Miss Lucretia at dinner: fortunately she was in a pleasant humour; and giving a gulp to my pride, I praised her skill in carving, and told her the story of poor Mrs. Primrose's white satin gown, and the unlucky goose-carver's disgrace, in the best manner. I succeeded; and my next manœuvre was to overlook the poor girl who silently sat beside me, patiently expecting to have her empty plate supplied. My unusual politeness was not lost, for I also talked of Jamaica. Upon this ground, I presume, she called for a glass of rum and water, "half and half," and drank to all friends there. Even this went

down my proud stomach in a glass of wine, and I became so *agreeable* that she invited me and the circle to drink tea in her apartment. Our cheerful acceptance of her invitation was followed by a recollection of her dress, which was not *en règle*, and she left us to prepare the silver tea-board, and to make her toilet. I was delighted to find Sir Murdock had enjoyed this scene: he told his ^{be}wife I was a plotter, and bade her beware of my Circean-arts. She smiled, and said I needed no auxiliaries, otherwise she would readily join my standard, seeing it was my design to lead tyranny captive.

On entering Miss Flint's drawing-room, I perceived that Mary had been permitted to put on her Sunday muslin gown; and to her native charms and holiday suit, her youthful fancy had given the finish by placing some moss-roses in her bosom. She was seated in the remotest of the bow windows, with a huge

mass of canvass before her, and was plying her needle with all dispatch to get up the lost time. The endless roll of carpeting was now displayed. Miss Cowley could not but praise the design; and she heard that *three* years would finish the furniture of the room in cross-stitch, without *one comment* that could offend. Can you wonder that Mary was allowed to fetch her bonnet, and to join the walking party after tea? Will you not rather wonder at my success in this new trial of my talents? But between ourselves, I begin to suspect that the art of wheedling, is one of our natural prerogatives. You cannot imagine with what dexterity I employed my untried weapons! It was well they served me; for during the demurs and difficulties Miss Flint opposed to my intreaties, I felt my forbearance was like Acre's courage, not indeed oozing out at my fingers' ends, but with every breath I drew; and

had she not consented when she did, I should have lost my hard-earned laurels. You will not, however, fail in congratulating me on my triumph over myself. But mark me, Lucy, I mean not to twist and turn at the orders of that prudence which is so often practised for wisdom. It is necessary for my purpose that Miss Howard's friends should know more of me before I can effectually oppose Miss Flint's will; but when they do understand that Rachel Cowley can no more live under the same roof with an oppressed orphan, than Miss Lucretia shelter one, without feeding her spleen, and qualifying her malice for the bread she bestows, farewell wheedling and coaxing! My road will be plain, and if perchance I encounter any of Miss Lucretia's frowns in my way, I shall laugh at them.

This poor girl hangs on my spirits. I will reserve for my next letter the ac-

count of our evening walk. You will lose nothing by my going to bed; for I am weary, and somewhat of your petulant

RACHEL COWLEY.

LETTER VIII.

Miss Cowley to Miss Hardcastle.

WE found the party in the hay-field augmented by all farmer Wilson's family, namely, his wife, with a Mrs. and Miss Heartley, their boarders and lodgers, to whom Malcolm introduced us with an eagerness of good-will and pleasure which was flattering to me. The tender greetings between those ladies and Mary, evidently proved that I had communicated more of joy and gladness than I had foreseen, by my interference; and as this was the case, I took my share of the general satisfaction, which appeared like the sky, *cloudless*. Mrs. Wilson soon re-

stored us to order, by leading us to seats under a hay-cock, and began to distribute amongst us a syllabub milked from the cow, with some fruit and cakes. Sir Murdock, who had appeared placid, though silent, suddenly turning to his son, desired him to change seats with him. This request was indulged with alacrity, and he placed his father next Mrs. Heartley. "How often of late," said the poor baronet, surveying her with a melancholy air, "have I wished to have the opportunity of telling you, that Sir Murdock Maclairn esteems and reverences you for your unremitting kindnesses and consideration for his Malcolm. Yet now I am near you, language fails me; I am oppressed by my feelings. Recollections too painful for me meet this hour of peace and restored happiness." He took her hand and burst into tears. Mrs. Heartley, with much emotion and confusion, said something of her hopes of

being still favoured with his good opinion, and of her satisfaction at seeing her worthy neighbour. He caught the last word of her incoherent speech. "Yes," replied he, "I hope we shall be *neighbours* as well as *friends*! My sufferings are terminated. Witness this hour of peace! Witness the mercy which has sent me an angel of consolation!"—He gazed wildly on my face; and sinking his head between his knees and hands, he murmured out "Matilda! sainted, blessed Matilda!" I was alarmed.—"It will be momentary," said the agitated Malcolm, in a low voice, "be not disturbed!" He was not mistaken, for in a few minutes Sir Murdock's serenity was restored; and he asked Miss Heartley, in a manner which marked that he had no consciousness of his late disorder, some questions relative to her brother who was in the East-Indies. She replied; and the baronet, with renewed

cheerfulness and an expressive smile, said, "And what excuse will you make to 'this dear brother,' when he knows you have monopolized a heart which he ought to share?" A deep blush was the only answer to this question, which awakened my curiosity. I was however called from further observation by being asked for a song; but willing to make the conversation more general, I alledged that I was too angry to sing; and, with assumed resentment, I reproached the captain's want of discretion as well as courage in bringing into the field so many witnesses of my weakness, and so many guards against his own. "You wrong your gallant, by your suspicious, Miss Cowley," answered Mrs. Heartley, with ease and spirit. But what will he answer to my reproaches? He has been my slave these twenty years and more, and yet had the audacity to conceal this assignation from me. I am indebted to

my friend Mr. Malcolm for the intelligence of my danger ; and I now see it," added she, laughing ; " yet, woman to the last, I will maintain my rights to him against youth and beauty."—A certain mode of expression, with the correct gaiety and ease of her manners, soon attached me to this lady's side ; and in our walk home she apparently slackened her pace, the more unnoticedly to converse with me.—" You will think me very deficient in the rules of good breeding," said she, when entering the road to the hall, " on finding that I neglect to pay you my respects at Sir Murdock's house ; but I do not visit the family. My avowed affection and long intimacy with Mrs. Howard, and my still longer acquaintance with Captain Flint, have laid me under indelible disgrace with Miss Flint. Lady Maclairn's situation, and the circumstances of distress under which she has lived, have

precluded all approaches to her of a personal kind. You will therefore, I trust, accept of this apology for my not waiting on you and your friend. Yet," continued she, smiling, "you must not imagine me a woman too obscure for Miss Flint's notice. In her zeal for her neighbours' good behaviour, she has thought proper to single me out as an object to be feared and shunned by all modest women. There is, however, a conduct, Miss Cowley, that will refute malice and silence slander, without calling out either resentment or reproach. Mine is such as has done more than was needful for my justification, for it has disappointed an angry woman in her purpose; and my neighbours have always judged me according to that rule of Christian charity, 'which thinketh no evil.' They have also gone farther than this precept will justify, for I believe they think I must be *good*, because Miss Flint hates

me. Malcolm's attachment to me and my children has also its share in keeping alive Miss Flint's animosity. From a child this young man has been regarded, by myself and the family at large with whom I reside, as a cherished and favoured guest. This circumstance has, I much fear, been unfavourable to Miss Howard; it has certainly abridged her in her freedom. She is not permitted to visit her uncle, because he lives under the same roof with me; and she dares not speak to either Alice or myself, when accident throws her in our path, if she has a servant with her. My poor girl murmurs at this refinement in cruelty, and strenuously pleads that I ought to inform Captain Flint of this harsh prohibition; but I forbear, in the hopes that time will relax Miss Lucretia's heart; and in the interim Mr. Maclairn favours the girls in writing. Miss Howard's account of Miss Cowley produced the wish to see

her," added she smiling. "This we have effected; and I have only now to add, that if in your seclusion from the world you should feel disposed to relieve the dull monotony of your hours by a walk to us, we shall be gratified.—I was formerly acquainted with your friend Counsellor Steadman. When you write to to him, ask him whether he has forgotten Henry Heartley, and whether he thinks his widow a proper associate for you." I expressed my confidence in her worth. Shesmi led, and thanked me. "But, added she, "it is necessary you should know the woman who, at my age and with my appearance, cautions you to keep, as a *secret*, from Miss Flint, even the harmless recreation of this evening. Our meeting Mary would not be allowed to be accidental on her part, and I doubt she is severely treated by her aunt. She conceals from her friend Alice every instance of this kind, but

Malcolm is not so reserved with us, and we are miserable on her account. The captain hopes to soften his sister's heart to a sense of justice at least, and has given up the comfort and prop of his life to the fallacious expectation that Miss Flint will love and provide for the future support of this poor orphan. I did not in the first instance oppose his plan of conciliation. His sister offered to take her; and he yielded her up to her promises of being her friend and protector; but if he knew Miss Howard's situation she would not remain a hour at Tarefield-hall. Poor Mary understands this perfectly; and with an heroism which does her credit, suffers without complaint, rather than return to be a burden on her uncle. I need not recommend to your favour," continued she, "this innocent and helpless girl. We are told that you pity her, but be cautious in what you say to her uncle. His mind

has been broken down by sorrow and the injuries of fortune, his feelings are become irritable, and his spirit will not brook further insult. Perhaps this gentle creature may find her aunt has a heart. Time must be allowed her to work a change in so obdurate a mind; it is her wish to make the trial complete; but a year and more has been lost already in the attempt, and I have my doubts of her ever being easy or happy where she is."—"Mrs. Allen and myself," observed I, "were much struck by the mode in which this young and amiable creature was treated, even before we had been a day at Tarefield; but Miss Flint soon explained to me her system, and left me nothing for wonder, though sufficient for abhorrence. But, my dear Mrs. Heartley, do me the favour, if it be possible, to explain to me Lady Maclairn's conduct. I wish to esteem her. Wherefore is it, that with a temper so mild and gentle,

I see her passively yielding up her dignity in her own house, and witnessing in silence her sister's treatment of an unoffending girl, who has a just claim even upon *her ladyship* for protection."—"Poor Lady Maclairn," replied she, "is inured to suffering. She knows she can effect nothing, but by an abject submission to Miss Flint. Many causes have contributed to break down her spirits; but none have lessened her principles of virtue: she is an estimable woman, and much to be pitied."—We were interrupted by Mary's running towards us to take leave of Mrs. Heartley. She threw her arms around her neck, and, fondly kissing her, said, "Now you will believe that I am comfortable! One day in a month like this would be happiness! You see I have now a dear, kind friend!"—Our general adieux followed; but again Malcolm deserted us for the plea of business at Wilson's.

Whether it was owing to my dose of flattery, or to the rum bottle, I will not decide; but certain it is, that Miss Lucretia received us with good-humour. She was more than commonly loquacious; and I, with the patience of a Lady Maclairn, listened to the history of her sprained knee, which had spoiled her for a walker. This disastrous subject gave place to her inviting me to take an airing with her the following morning, when she engaged to shew me a very "pretty country." But this was nothing, for I was even proof against a long story in which her dear brother Philip was the hero, and I was led to approve of his conduct by a direct interrogation. "Was not his behaviour noble?"—I forgot the tale, but I recollect he saved a young woman's being thrown from her horse. I had, however, my measures to keep, and we retired for the night in perfect good-humour. What a simpleton I have been

in not at first beginning to manage this woman by my address! She would fetch and carry like a spaniel were she but flattered. But more of this hereafter. You must know more of Mrs. Heartley and her fair daughter Alice. Mrs. Heartley is more indebted to an air of fashion and dignity, for the attractions of her person, than either to her features or shape. Her face would be called homely were it not lighted up by her dark and expressive eyes; and although I believe she is defective in her shape, she moves with grace, and is what you would distinguish by the title of an "elegant woman." Her daughter would at once be thought by the admirers of half-starved, pale-faced beauties, as too nearly approaching to the dairy maid; for contentment and health have given Alice an *embon point* beyond the prescribed rules of fashion. She is a clear brunette, and her damask cheek has a *rouge* which

thousands vainly strive to imitate. A pair of large hazel eyes give life and spirit to her round and dimpled face, and when she smiles (and Alice has yet to learn that smiles and laughter are vulgar) she is a perfect Hebe ; and Mrs. Allen wished Bunbury had seen her, as he would not have omitted to give this laughter-loving nymph in his charming group of rural beauties. She tells me that I have not been just to Alice: perhaps I have not ; and that I should have been more lavish of my praise of this handsome girl, had she not been by the side of Miss Howard. But again I pronounce this young creature to be nature's master-piece ! I had not before seen her animated by pleasure or exercise, nor could I have believed her delicate features capable of expressing the vivacity she discovered. She seemed to tread in air, and, whilst with winning smiles and captivating grace, she drew around her the people

who were at work, the greater part of whom she called by their names, I could not but apply to this innocent enchantress the lines given to the charms of the mischief-making Armida.

“ In wavy ringlets falls her beautiful hair,
That catch new graces from the sportive air :
Declin'd on earth, her modest look denies
To shew the starry lustre of her eyes :
O'er her fair face a rosy bloom is spread,
And stains her ivory neck with lovely red :
Soft breathing sweets her opening lips disclose,
The native odours of the budding rose.”

I could not forbear uttering this rhapsody to the captain as he stood near me, whilst Mary was receiving the honest admiration of her humble friends. He smiled, but a sigh succeeded. “ She is fair and lovely,” said he with emotion, “ and as good as she is fair, and as innocent as she is lovely ;—but so was her mother, Miss Cowley; yet she found this

world a hard pilgrimage!" He turned away from me, and joined his niece. I will now bid you farewell.—Mrs. Allen joins in my blessings for your repose.
—Yours,

RACHEL COWLEY.

LETTER IX.

From the same to the same.

YOUR letter of Thursday, my dear Lucy, is in my hands twenty-four hours sooner than I expected it; but good news cannot travel too fast, and I sit down as blithe as a bird to thank you for the contents of an epistle which has renewed my spirits, and which will render me the "best creature in the world with Miss Lucretia;" for whose summons I am prepared in order to take an airing, and which allows me only time at present to tell you, that I am happy to find you do not any longer think your compliance

with your brother's request, is indispensable on the ground of duty. Why should he not be indulged with the sight of my gossiping letters from hence? Erase, expunge what you please; but gratify him with the details which you find amuse yourself. Let him see that his sister contrives to make in this dull portion of her life, those exertions which prevent her mind from stagnating. Do not think you err by deviating from the *letter* of your father's harsh law, whilst you so carefully adhere to the *spirit* of it. I would no more tempt my Lucy to sin, than I would sin myself. Horace knows that I am not a spiritless, whining, love-sick girl; but he well knows what I have to sustain in my separation from you, and in my removal from Heathcot. Have no fears, I beseech you, as to the final event of such an attachment as the one which binds me to Horace Hardcastle. When he ceases to be worthy of my

esteem and affection, I shall despise him; and when I forget myself, he will despise me. Neither your father's scruples, nor the maxims of the world will lessen the ties which unite our hearts; of this be assured.—I am summoned, the coach drives up.

LETTER IX.

In continuation.

IT was not to the fault of the weather, my dear Lucy, that Miss Flint could attribute her return home with a head-ach; nor do I attribute my fatigue to the morning airing; but I begin to find out that I am not yet quite proof against provocations: read, and judge. The mistress of the vehicle with much cheerfulness received me into it, and observed most graciously, that it was time for Miss

Cowley “to see a little about her.” In consequence of this intention she gave the servant his directions, and we proceeded not more than a mile, before “Miss Cowley” discovered that Tarefield-hall had not been more unfortunate in the lack of taste in its first projector, than it has been since in its lack of cheerfulness and contentment; for gradually descending from the heath, we came in view of the village, and a country, by no means unpicturesque. My attention to the valley in sight, through which meanders a branch of the river War, was interrupted by our approach towards a large house, which still wore the relics of Gothic architecture, and past magnificence. Upon enquiry, I learned that it was still called the “Abbey,” and was the residence of “*one Wilson, a farmer.*”—“What a striking monument it offers,” observed I, surveying the venerable mansion, “of the lapse of

time, and the vanity of human greatness!" — "Yes," replied Miss Flint, "it is enough to make one sick of this world, to see such a house in the possession of an *upstart*, who would have had his post in the stables had one of the "*Ingrams*" still been its master. But this family is happily extinct. *Happily*, I say, for I am certain they could not rest in their graves, if they knew who lorded in the Abbey at this day! But it is to be hoped these people will have their turn! I have heard they got this estate in a shameful manner! Wilson's uncle I believe was an arrant rogue, and the beggar on horseback is exemplified in his heir." This subject having considerably discomposed the placid features of my companion, I prudently dropped it; and she, pulling the check-string, bade the driver stop at Mrs. Snughead's gate.

It was not difficult to discover the ease and opulence of the rector of Tare-

field parish, from a view of his neat and genteel abode, which fronts the road, and has a flower-garden, with gravel walks before it. We stopped at the gate; the servant was ordered to go the kitchen way, for enquiries respecting the lady's health. "I shall not go in," said Miss Flint, "for we should spoil the gravel, and give Mrs. Snughead a fever-fit for the day at least; besides, she would not amuse us with her tiresome details of nervous fits, and sleepless nights." A maid-servant from the front door appeared, her feet shod with two flat pieces of board, who, shuffling to the carriage, brought her lady's compliments, and hoped that we would enter the house. "Not now, Martha," answered Miss Flint. "When do you expect your master home?"—"Madam has had a letter this morning," replied the girl, "and the clerk is to tell the young gentleman, that Mr. Snughead will do duty on Sunday himself."—"Well

that is good news, Martha," observed Miss Flint, "and I hope your mistress is in spirits." "Poor lady!" answered the girl in a tone of pity, "she has never held up her head since her poor son Mr. Banks left us; she is quite broken down, Madam! I wish you would have the goodness to see her. The kitchen is quite in order," added she, glancing her eyes on the untrod path to the house. "Poor soul!" said Miss Flint, "I could not comfort her, Martha, and I am pressed for time. Give my love to her. Drive on, William." Thus concluded the *friendly* call. "You have had a good escape," observed she, settling her large person more at ease. "We should have been detained an hour with Mrs. Snughead's lamentations about her son. I pity her husband most sincerely, for he has for twelve years and more had the plague of a wife, who is hourly dying, if you credit her, and whose death he dreads; for her

jointure of five hundred pounds per annum, pays for her board, though in my opinion, not for his life of mortification and continual fear. When I see such marriages as these," continued she with an air of self-complacency, "I bless my good fortune in having escaped matrimony; not that I think there are none happy but those who are unshackled, for I am persuaded there are many happy matches; and that a young woman cannot do more prudently, than to secure to herself an honourable protection, and a worthy man. When I was young, I was too useful to my poor father to think of changing my condition. I was my father's only comfort during a period of his life rendered miserable by the conduct and ingratitude of his children; particularly his favourite daughter, Mrs. Howard, whom he brought up with too much fondness and indulgence. His second marriage was an absurdity; and

he soon found that it added little to his domestic enjoyments. It did not require the spirit of witchcraft, for me to foresee what did result from so unequal an union as my father's with this young bride; but I could not desert my post even then with satisfaction to myself. The mother-in-law was a mere child in the knowledge proper for the mistress of a family; and I soon discovered, that my father had only added to my cares by placing at his table an indolent woman, who only married him in order to live at her ease. However, I will be just to Lady Maclairn; as my father's wife, she conducted herself with discretion and modesty, and I have in return been her constant friend.

Her marriage with Sir Murdock was a foolish business! Mr. Flamall strongly opposed it; but Harriot was always romantic! He predicted *then*, that the baronet would be crazy; and well he

might, for he had symptoms of insanity which no one could overlook. But a title, though without a groat, flattered Mrs. Flint's vanity, and I had only to reconcile matters, and to think of preventing the evils of this connection as it related to my dear Philip's security. You may judge, Miss Cowley," continued she with augmenting seriousness, "of my affection for a brother, whom, from the hour of his birth, I considered as consigned in a peculiar manner to my guardianship and care. His mother's second marriage enforced these duties on my heart; to shelter him, I was determined to offer my house to Lady Maclairn as a residence at once honourable and prudent for her. Thus has it happened, that I have had for years a lunatic under my roof. Besides this, I boarded the whole family at so moderate a sum, that with a better regulated economy, Lady Macclairn might have saved something for

Malcolm's exigencies, for Philip was entirely my charge; but I cannot imagine how she manages her purse, it is never beforehand, and I doubt, Malcolm will take care to prevent all accumulations. - Idleness at his age is a melancholy prospect! I wish Harriot may not live to repent of her confidence in this young man. But now I am on the subject of my family, I will add a few words in explanation of my conduct, as it relates to another object of my care. Were you, Miss Cowley, acquainted with all the insults and injuries I have sustained from Mary Howard's parents, you would only wonder to find her under my roof. But when I received her, to relieve my brother Percival from a burden he could ill sustain, I meant not to train her up to any expectations but such as resulted from her mother's imprudence. She it was who entailed poverty on her child; and I shall fulfil my duty, in teaching

her to be useful and industrious ; lessons she never would have learned but for me. I know she has complained to you of my severity, as she and her friends call my vigilance”——“Never, Madam,” said I, interrupting her, “your plan of conduct needed no explanation with me ; and Miss Howard neither directly nor indirectly has accused you of doing wrong in my presence.”——“Well,” answered she, with great warmth, “on this point I am perfectly at my ease, provided she tells you at the same time, that her parents brought my dear father with sorrow to his grave, and that my peace and happiness were destroyed by their perfidy.” She spoke, and looked so like a fury, my dear Lucy, that I was absolutely silenced by dismay. “But let us change this topic,” continued she, softening her voice, “for one more agreeable to you, and less painful to myself. I think I need not say to Miss Cowley,

that I acceded with joy to my dear brother's prospects of an alliance with you. I must however observe that your worthy father, not only evinced his affection for you in his choice of Philip, but the prudence of a man solicitous for the prosperity of a rising family. On the score of merit and conduct, Philip needs not fear any competitor for your favour. His fortune will be ample and solid, for I consider myself as only his steward. Mr. Flamall's proposal of your residing at the hall, was a matter I heartily concurred in; and in order to give Lady Maclairn more consequence in a family you have honoured by your presence, and to which you will belong, I resigned my authority in it, and became, like yourself, a boarder; paying at the rate of six hundred pounds per annum for the accommodations of myself and servants." —I was going to speak, in order to spare her any further display of her consum-

mate prudence, but she proceeded.—

“ I have said nothing of the person of your ‘ *intended*,’ ” said she, with a most gracious smile. “ This is his picture drawn when he was about eighteen.”

She presented me a miniature of the young man, which to say the truth was strikingly handsome. “ Nature has been liberal to your favourite,” observed I, examining the portrait.

“ He is much improved in his person,” said she with eagerness, “ since that age. There is not in England a finer made man !

I am certain you will allow this when you see him.”—“ I hope to be disposed

to render justice to Mr. Flint’s merit in every point,” answered I, “ for this con-

sideration he has a right which he may claim ; but, my dear Madam, I conceived,

that you, as well as the rest of Mr. Flint’s family, understood that I had

declined the conditions of my father’s will : I was explicit with Sir Murdock.

Mr. Flamall, and consequently your nephew, know by this time, that Rachel Cowley is not to be transferred like her father's negroes from one master to another. I have no resentment against Mr. Flint. His pretensions to me are too ridiculous for a serious examination; and if he have a just title to the character he bears, he will scorn, as I do, an interference so offensive to his honour, and so humiliating to his self-love. I could say more on this subject," added I with spirit, "but it is unnecessary; and I request I may be spared from renewing it. Lady Maclairn has avoided it; and you, Madam, when you know more of me, will give me credit for a frankness in my manner of treating it, which is as *decisive as it is firm*. Mr. Flamall is my *scorn*, and I wish by hearing nothing more of *his nephew*, to respect Mr. Philip Flint as your brother, and Lady Maclairn's son. When I marry, it will not

be a husband of Mr. Flamall's appointing." The rising and deepening tints of Miss Lucretia's fiery cheek, prepared me for her speech. "I would advise you, Miss Cowley, as a friend," said she, "to be cautious of provoking a man of Mr. Flamall's character, by using a language of this kind to him, whatever may be your intention in regard to the duty you owe to your deceased father's will."—"My father's will," exclaimed I, "will not be violated by my rejection of Mr. Flamall's authority, which, in every instance, I despise!"—"It is because you do not know him, I am a very certain," answered she with suppressed rage. "You are mistaken, Madam," replied I with firmness, "I *do* know Mr. Flamall. It is himself, who from the false estimate he has made of his talents, forgets it was necessary for him *to know* his benefactor's daughter, before he hazarded a scheme which will end in his defeated

ambition. My residence at Tarefield is the prelude only of my designs, to shew this man, that he can do no more than be subservient to a *Cowley*: this I will make him, and it may be he will acknowledge this. *I only* understood the secret of teaching him to know his place and duty; my father assuredly did not.” —“ You astonish me,” said she, “ by your violence and prejudice against Mr. Flamall; you even insinuate suspicions against his honour.” —“ *Honour!*” repeated I with a look which seemed to silence his defender; “ the honour of Mr. Flamall cannot suffer.” The remainder of our road was passed without a single word being exchanged. She retired to her own room, on arriving at the hall. At dinner, Mary said her aunt had gotten a head-ach and could eat nothing. I suspect she drank the more, for before supper the dear girl joined us, saying her

aunt was in bed and asleep, having been much fatigued, and out of spirits.

The evening was too inviting not to tempt us out. Not a breeze ruffled its serenity; the moon shed her silver radiance o'er the tranquil scene. Mary, light of heart, bounded before us like a sylph. Sir Murdock spouted Ossian with enthusiastic delight. Your Rachel's spirits had been disturbed, and to compose themselves they made an excursion—no matter where,—since they found repose. Lady Maclairn and Mrs. Allen, wisely judging that star-gazing and quoting, might not suit them so well as walking, proceeded to meet the truant Malcolm, in which purpose they succeeded; and we walked till a late hour. Amongst the various conjectures which my ingenuity has suggested in my endeavours to fathom the real character of Lady Maclairn, I began to suspect that she had some intention to circumvent her bro-

ther in his plans of securing my father's property for *his* favourite. She has hitherto most diligently adhered to the conditions I exacted, rarely mentioning even the name of her son Philip, whereas she frequently descants with fondness and eloquence on the merit and conduct of her "dear Malcolm," "her prop," "her boast." I had even infused into Mrs. Allen's mind something of my own suspicions, when on our return to the house after meeting with the young man, chance gave to me a secret which has quite upset this opinion of Lady MacLairn's policy. Something which escaped Mary, whose arm I had taken, in the gaiety of her heart, produced from me the question, "Is then Mr. MacLairn a lover?"—"Yes," replied she, "he has courted Miss Heartley a long time." "Do Sir Murdock and his mother approve of his attachment?" "Oh dear, yes!" answered she, with innocent vivacity,

“How should they do otherwise? She is one of the most amiable girls in the world, as well as the most virtuous and prudent of her sex. Besides, Malcolm and Alice have loved each other from their childhood, and they will never cease to love.” I was answered and satisfied. So you see, Lucy, these freaks of fancy happen *elsewhere* as well as at *Heathcot*. I think in another century parents may discover the force of sympathy, and will think of some remedy for the mischief it may do whilst their children are in the cradle. It is a wretched business, when poor unfortunate beings, whose wealth is unequal, take it into their heads to yield to the attraction of sympathy. It is still worse, when the scale of fortune is empty on both sides. Might not the now useless sash worn by children round their waists, be usefully worn over their eyes till they are properly *married*? I speak only of those neglected children, who,

left to nature's lessons, are so apt to receive impressions from beings as devoid of instruction as themselves ; for I am aware, that young people *properly* educated for the world they are to live in, want no mufflers. They may be trusted with the use of their eyes ; or should it happen that a beam of light dazzles them for a moment, a coach-and-six, a diamond necklace, or a sounding name, will restore them to the true point of vision. But I must be serious. What pains and penalties, my Lucy, does the folly of man give to the pilgrimage of this life ! Not satisfied with the allotted portion of trial deemed by Providence for our *benefit*, or to travel in a road prepared by infinite goodness for our feeble powers, we seem to be diligent in obstructing it when smooth and level, with thorns and briars of our own seeking. Your good father, my Lucy, with all his wisdom, dares not make his chil-

dren happy,—and, why not? Because Miss Cowley ought to marry a man as rich as herself. Where does Mr. Hardcastle find this law? In a world he despises.—“Is it not late, my dear child,” asks the sympathizing, Mrs. Allen, looking compassionately on my tell-tale eyes. It is time to forget the world at least.

Yours, ever,

RACHEL COWLEY.

LETTER X.

From the same to the same.

Unbending dignity, Lucy, has been a match for sullenness. I have conquered; and Miss Flint has broken silence, and held out the olive branch. But hold, it was not that unbending dignity you may suspect which produced peace, it was in sober truth my *folly* which did the business; for as she could not always look

grave when others laughed, she forgot her anger and laughed with the rest. As I have measures to keep, I was in nowise ungracious in my turn, and all discord was buried by my reading to the collected circle, the comedy you sent me. Before we parted, Miss Flint mentioned her intention of going to church the next morning, and I readily engaged to accompany her. You must have been surprised, that I have not mentioned to you our having been in a church since I have been here, but the absence of the rector had slackened Miss Flint's zeal, and the baronet and his lady preferred their own prayers to Mr. Snughead's. Mrs. Allen likes their form of devotion, and having a head-ach, has remained quiet to profit from Sir Murdock's sermon. A little of the still fermenting leaven, as I suspect, induced Miss Flint to disappoint my expectations of a ride with her niece; on my enquiring for her, she said with a haughty

air, that Mary preferred walking with Warner, her woman. We soon reached the church, and I followed my stately conductress to a pew in the church, in which was another equally distinguished by its size and decorations of lining and cushions. We had scarcely seated ourselves, for Miss Flint performs this business with peculiar caution and regard to her dress, before the Abbey family entered, escorted by Malcolm; and they took the adjoining pew. I instantly rose, and paying my compliments, asked Miss Heartley for the captain. She told me he was with Miss Howard, and following them. I again took my seat. "Why! where, in the name of wonder!" whispered Miss Flint, "*did those women* become known to you?" My answer was prevented by a harsh and strong voice, which rapidly began the service. The captain's entrance with his niece again discomposed Miss Flint's features, and the confessional

prayer was lost to her whilst she was chiding Mary for her delay. She meekly said, Mrs. Warner could not walk fast, and retiring to a remote corner of the pew, composed herself with seriousness to the duty before her. A sermon on the deceitfulness of riches, begun and finished in less than ten minutes, concluded Mr. Snughead's task. I again acknowledged the *women* in the next pew for my acquaintance, with a frankness and cordiality, which still more surprised Miss Flint. "I find my brother the captain," observed she fixing her eyes on him, "needs not any introduction to you, Miss Cowley; otherwise"——"Oh dear, no!" answered I, "Sir Murdock has anticipated you in your obliging intention. I have had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Flint in my walk." Thus saying, I joined Mr. Heartley, and left Miss Flint to the care and compliments of the rector at the church-yard gate. She with much dignity mounted

into her coach; I followed. The captain was coldly asked whether he and Mary walked; an affirmation was given: then turning to the obsequious divine, she invited him to take an airing, and to dine also, at the hall. Some excuse was pleaded, which I did not hear. "Phoo!" replied she, "there is no end of such whims. You will make an arrant slave of yourself."—"Well, I submit," answered he, leering at me, "I cannot be in better hands than yours." "We will take a circuit home," observed Miss Lucretia; with much complacency, "Miss Cowley is yet a stranger to the country, and you will contribute to recommend it." He bowed. Now, Lucy, knowing, as I do, your predilection for the cloth, I mean to be on my guard how I lessen your partiality for the black coat you so peculiarly favour: yet, truth is truth, and though I mean not to reproach you for your want of taste, I must tell you there is no comparison to be

drawn between Mr. Sedley and the reverend Mr. Snughead; to besure, our curate has some qualifications, with which in the opinion of the simple souls at Heathcot, he might rise to an archbishopric without disgrace to the pastoral crook; but in some particulars, he is a mere cypher compared to the rector of Tarefield parish. "Proofs, proofs," methinks I hear you call for. Well, be not angry, you shall have them, I advance nothing without proofs, nor any thing in malice. I honestly allow that Sedley is handsome; but his beauty is of that kind which will never make his fortune; for people in general do not much care to admire graces of any kind which they can neither rival, nor like to copy. Now, I have a notion that Mr. Snughead was, in the days of his youth, which by the way is on its wane, universally allowed to be irresistible, and that he answered exactly to what some ladies denominate "a sweet

pretty man, a neat dapper fellow, a teasing mortal." His features are still small and regular, and his complexion, naturally fair, is thought less delicate than in the days of his youth, still good; his teeth are white and even, and have suffered nothing from neglect. But either from a scurvy trick of nature, or from his neglect of fasting (I say nothing of praying), he is become so corpulent, that were one to encounter him on all fours, instead of the two limbs destined to support him, one would take him for a tortoise; you well know that I am no enemy to *en bon point*; whenever I see it with a cheerful countenance, I regard it as indicative of a contented mind: but unhappily, Mr. Snughead's opinions are diametrically the reverse of mine. He lives in open and perpetual war with this incroacher on the sympathy and elegance of his person; and by the cruelties he hourly inflicts on himself, suffers a martyrdom, from which

even the mortified Pascal would have shrunk; for I think it may be presumed, that by not eating his soup Pascal's penitential girdle was bearable; but poor Mr. Snughead cannot be at his ease either full or fasting. He imitates in barbarity the fell Procrastes, for his cloaths are made by a measure that has never been enlarged since the day of his gentility, and his unfortunate person, like the victim to the iron couch, is doomed to suffer under ligatures as painful as the rack. He seems momentarily in danger of suffocation, and I could not, without pity, hear him so often complain of the "melting weather," nor view unmoved his hand instinctively raised to his cravat in order to relieve his respiration. But Mr. Snughead's stoical firmness consoled me, and I next examined his dress. But what pen, my Lucy, can do justice to the elaborate neatness of this canonical beau! Who can describe the glossy black robes, the

polished shoes, the dazzling whiteness and texture of his linen! In what language shall I convey to your imagination the honours of his head, his tight, perfumed, well-powdered curls! I despair, you must even fancy perfection. The frequent application of a well-scented, delicate cambric handkerchief to his face, gave me an opportunity of discovering that it was not his tight lacing which had impelled his hand to his throat, but the desire of exhibiting this precious relic of former beauty; for although somewhat in shape dropsical, it yet retains its whiteness, and is properly distinguished by a sumptuous amethyst ring encircled with brilliants. I was diverted from further observation, by his abruptly addressing me with, "Well, my pretty young lady, what say you to our north roads? Is not this a very pleasant one? What do you think of that prospect in view?" I coldly replied, that the village looked pleasant; and turning

to Miss Flint asked the name of it. She mentioned it, and observed to Mr. Snughead, that *Greenwood's* plantations were flourishing. This person was, I discovered, the clergyman of the parish in view, and not in the number of Miss Lucretia's *elect*; but as Mr. Snughead had not succeeded in showing me his wit; he returned to the charge. "You will soon be pleased with your situation, I hope," said he, taking my hand, "and we shall hear you acknowledge the happiness you will meet here, without travelling further; a road which so many young ladies take, to find the temple of Hymen." I withdrew my hand, and answered him with one of my petrifying looks, as you have named my honest contempt of *puppyism*." "When do you expect your brother?" continued he unmindful of my frowns. It was not determined, was the concise reply, and a silence ensued. Again the civil Mr. Snughead began. "I hear wonders of Sir

Murdock's health and amendment," said he, addressing Miss Flint; "they tell me his journey to London has quite renovated him. "It has produced exactly the consequences I predicted," replied she, with a toss of her head. "He is now as much too *high* in his spirits as he has been depressed; *now* he is always in motion and busy, and as a proof of his amendment, he has in his walks with Miss Cowley met the *Heartleys*, and as I suppose, introduced them to her, as neighbours of mine and Lady Maclairn's."—"Always in the wrong, poor man!" said he: "perhaps he told you, Miss Cowley, that they were duchesses incognito, for he knows them not himself. However, my dear *Madam*," continued he with a more respectful manner, "I think you should be on your guard, and never walk with Sir Murdock without another companion. There is no dependence to be placed on a man whose mind is so unsettled as the poor baronet's."

“When I perceive Sir Murdock acts either like a madman or a fool,” answered I, “it will be time enough to avoid him; hitherto, I have seen no indications of an unsettled mind.” “Perhaps not, *young lady*,” answered he with tartness, “neither your age nor experience, I presume, have given you the opportunity of understanding, that there is very frequently a wonderful shrewdness and cunning in madness.”—“I have observed no inconsistency in Sir Murdock’s mind,” answered I, with seriousness, “nor has he discovered to me any of that cunning you speak of, which I conclude may, and must be detected, if the person’s mind be disordered. However,” continued I, assuming a careless air, “if in any instance there can be found so much of *method* in madness, as to evade all examination, it entirely confirms the received opinion, that madness and wit are closely allied. Folly under this supposition

appears to me to be worse than lunacy, for that is incurable."

I am rather disposed to think that something in my too honest face proclaimed what I thought; I felt it glow, and I was out of humour: Mr. Snughead of course had the advantage of me, for with much officiousness he endeavoured to be agreeable. *I was the rebel Rachel Cowley*,—I could not help it, Lucy. On reaching the hall, I followed Mr. Snughead's steps, on whose arm Miss Flint leaned; and I overheard the puppy say, "Proud enough in conscience!" "Inconceivably so," was the reply. Yes, Lucy, I am proud, I disdain the civility that can simper at the conceits of a Mr. Snughead, and despise the impudence of any clerical man, who forgetting himself, and the respect that is due to his profession, fancies his *dress* is to enforce respect from others. What right has a reptile of this class to the tribute which all pay to a Sedley?

No, no! I am too provident "to cast pearls before swine." You know my infirmity, Lucy; I have now taken a rooted antipathy to this Mr. Snughead, not only as he is a contemptible creature, but because he irritated me to anger. I was vexed and out of humour with myself. The kindly greetings of the collected family were lost upon me, and I was on the point of quitting the room, when luckily, I observed Sir Murdock's cold and ceremonious bow to the intruder. A placid and contracted air yielded to a suffusion of his Scotch "*blude*," which for a moment mantled in his cheek: this moment was of use to me, I recollected myself. My gaiety succeeded to this little triumph, and even Mr. Snughead was treated with *civility*. An excellent dinner was a temptation I should have supposed this gentleman had been proof against; I will not say that he eat like an epicure, but most assuredly he eat more

than his waistcoat allowed, for he suddenly complained of a most violent pain in his stomach, and Miss Flint prescribed a glass of rum. My tender heart melted, and I was just going to recommend slackening his waistcoat, when I saw him have recourse to the remedy. He breathed more freely, and attributing his indisposition to the extreme heat of the day, perfected the cure by untying his cravat. But I am doomed to be incorrigible on certain points! I have not been able to get rid of my antipathy for this animal. Now attend to the conversation. "I hope you found Mrs. Snughead's health improved on your return home." This was a question from the lady of the mansion, who, till the cloth was removed, had not found time to talk. "I cannot flatter myself! She is, my lady, still very ill, very ill indeed: I am in constant anxiety, and have too much reason to fear that she will shorten her days by yielding to her complaint,

which is *merely* nervous. She is never out of the apothecary's hands, and it is my opinion, medicine does her more harm than good." The unfeigned sorrow with which Mr. Snughead delivered this opinion, induced Miss Flint to take the part of the comforter. "She will soon be better," observed she, "I have no doubt of it, now she is rid of her constant plague. You will see her spirits will mend in a sort time. But what have you done with young graceless?" "I saw him embarked for the West Indies," replied Mr. Snughead; "he was highly delighted with his uniform, and having gained his point, nothing would do but the army for Banks, and that predilection was, I fear, strengthened by his mother's opposition to it."—"He has been unfortunate in his destination," observed the captain, "and will have a bad climate to encounter; it has of late been fatal to thousands."—"He must take his chance

and trust to Providence," replied Mr. Snughead, with great gravity; "prudence and sobriety at his age, may preserve him, and I hope he will consider this, and be wise."—"Wise!" echoed Miss Lucretia, "he must act otherwise, in that case, than he has hitherto done, and associate with those wiser than himself. However, I commend him for his spirit; for nothing is so ridiculous as to see a young man tied to his mother's apron-string! And after all," continued the tender-hearted spinster, "none of us can die more than once; therefore it is a folly to think of what may happen or not happen to Mr. Banks."—Malcolm, who had during this conversation been biting a cork, with eyes flashing resentment, now burst into a sarcastic laugh. Lady Maclairn instantly rose, and observed, that the heat of the room incommoded her. A look of supplication directed to her son did not escape me. Every one agreed

that the garden was preferable, and we left the table. I retired to my room. From the window I soon after saw the party sauntering in the avenue, but as Miss Flint was not with them, I supposed she had also chosen her apartment for a *tête-à-tête* with Mr. Snughead. I therefore hastened down stairs to join my friends, when to my surprise and vexation, I found the *tête-à-tête* party quietly enjoying themselves on the garden-seat close to the door I had to pass. I could not escape them without rudeness. "You have done wisely," observed I languidly, "in being stationary."—"I think we have," answered Miss Flint, inviting me to occupy the vacant place by her side, "and I advise you to follow our example."—I urged that I was going to the avenue.—"You look fatigued," observed she with kindness, still pressing me to sit down, "and your friends will return soon, for I am certain we shall have

thunder.”—Not disposed for any exertions, I took the seat, and with truth acknowledged that I had the head-ach. My silence, or stupidity, if it must be so, probably led Miss Flint to pursue the thread of the conversation which I had interrupted; for, turning to Mr. Snughead, she said—“ But, as I was saying, Mr. Snughead, is it not your duty to prevent Wilson and his people from instantly occupying the only pew in the church open to strangers? It is really ridiculous to see such people so misplaced!”—“ I have no authority to prevent them,” answered he. “ The whole chancel is attached to the claims of Wilson, as the proprietor of the abbey lands. It was merely owing to accident he was not my patron for the living instead of yourself, for his uncle would have purchased it of your father; and Wilson might, if he pleased, place his servants in your pew; for, in fact, you

enjoy it by favour. But why do you not speak to your brother the captain? He certainly ought to sit with you on *every account*. He should not brave public opinion at church. It is, to say no more, indecorous to see him pass you with those *ladies*, and make the whole congregation stare, as they do, at his gallantry.”—“He would be disappointed of his aim if they did not,” answered Miss Flint, with anger; “it is to brave me, that he so far forgets decency——.” “You judge too severely of your brother,” observed the rector, in an assumed conciliatory tone; “it may be, and probably is, that the lady exacts this homage to her power. The poor captain is not the only one of his class who finds passive obedience and non-resistance an important duty, *without* the pale of the church as well as *within* it.”—“Who is now severe?” cried the facetious Miss Lucretia, tapping Mr. Smughead’s shoulder;

“but you married men do right to fancy your shackles no worse than those of your more fortunate brethren. In the mean time tell me what is your opinion of Mrs. Heartley’s *discretion*, in availing herself of such an introducer as Sir Murdock for getting acquainted with Miss Cowley? Pray may I ask,” continued she, addressing me, “how often you have met this *fashionable* and *easy* lady?”

“Once or twice in my walks,” replied I, desirous of continuing the conversation, “and I must confess that she pleased me by her manners; she is a well bred woman, has a cultivated understanding, and is entertaining.”—“Your opinion does justice to your candour, *young lady*,” observed the coxcomb near me. “She has, I am told, a good address, and can be very pleasant. I am not surprised that you were pleased with her; youth ought not to be suspicious.”—“It appears fortunately for my sagacity,” re-

plied I, laughing, "that Mrs. Heartley imposes on all ages. This will keep me in countenance, should the conclusions I have drawn from her appearance be erroneous. I took notice that all the females on the benches rose and curteseyed to her as she passed through the aisle at church." "So they would to Wilson's dung cart," answered he, laughing and shewing his large white teeth, "for the same return. They have *Madam* Wilson's skimmed milk in their mouths, and her Christmasplumb-pudding in perspective; and for these they would bend their knees and their necks ten times a day, although they are so insolent to their betters."—"You forget," observed Miss Flint, "that they owe some civility to the *village doctress*."—"True," answered he, "I forgot their obligations to Mrs. Heartley's James's powder and her worm-cakes, but I owe her no gratitude on that score; for if she go on, my surplice

fees will be diminished, and the sexton will starve.”—“ You are the drollest of mortals !” cried the exulting Miss Flint, “ but a truce with your wit. You well know my motives for removing Mary from Wilson’s. I had solid reasons for thinking the society she had in that house improper for her. I wish to caution Miss Cowley, without offending her. Are you not convinced that, if Sir Murdock had been a rational man, he would have judged, as Lady Maclairn and myself have done, that Mrs. Heartley and her daughter had no claims to Miss Cowley’s notice ?”

“ Upon my word you perplex me,” replied the sapient divine, passing his clay-coloured hand over his violet face; “ I know so little of these ladies! nothing indeed, but from report. My wife from the first had your scruples. I know not any *genteel* family that visits them. They say the mother is a very *lively* woman,

and no one can dispute the charms of Miss Alice! Our young man, Banks, was one of her admirers; but his mother did not approve of the intimacy between him and Harry Heartley. This gave offence, and the ladies overlook their pastor. I should imagine Miss Cowley would act with prudence, to be on the reserve with ladies who do not visit at the hall.”—The straggling party approached us, and our conversation finished.—To my great relief, I found that Miss Flint only waited their return, to bid adieu to the captain; pleading her engagement, and the moon, for passing the evening with “poor Mrs. Snughead.”—The carriage which was in waiting immediately appeared, and, with much formality, the Reverend Mr. Snughead took his leave.

All nature seemed to respire more freely as well as myself, after Mr. Snughead’s departure. The evening was indeed an Italian one, and Lady Maclairn

contrived to impart to it the charms which so often embellished those at Heathcot. We had a regale of fruit in the avenue, and every one was freed from constraint, and disposed for enjoyment. No, your poor Rachel was not in harmony with the scene. My spirits had been exhausted, and I felt unusually languid. I found a luxury in tears, and I sauntered from the circle. I could not check my imagination: it fondly traced our happy days. The regales of strawberries in the root-house; our Bacchanalian revelries under the mulberry trees, where we retaliated the mischief done to our frocks, by smearing Horace's face with the impurpled juice; our dear father's plots and contrivances, at hide and seek, and our mother's tales of wisdom and wonder! Oh, days of innocence and of peace! how soon departed! whilst the remembrances of your pure joys serve but to heighten the contrast of

those hours of my existence which are now lost to me ! What has Rachel Cowley in common with such beings as those who have tormented her to-day, thought I ! There are those who maintain, that in order to love virtue, we must know vice : but far be from me such experiments ! I want no hideous contrasts to shew me her genuine work ! I have witnessed that all her “ paths are pleasantness,” and all her purposes gracious ! What, under her benign influence, has been done with that turbulent self-will which, when a child, menaced me with destruction ! of that ignorance and presumption which would have rendered me pernicious to my fellow-creatures ! What had I been, Lucy, had I not been sheltered in the very bosom of virtue ? and am I a companion for a Miss Flint, or a Mr. Snughead ?”

I was roused from a train of thoughts like these by the sweet Mary. She approached me. “ Are you indisposed, my

dear Miss Cowley? You look fatigued,—take my arm : we will retire to the house. I raised my tearful eyes ; the very image of pity binding up the wounded foot of the pilgrim, met them. I recollected myself. I remembered it was *Mary's* holiday ; and that my dejection clouded her hour of satisfaction. I pressed her hand, and joined my friends with assumed alacrity. She understood me, and I was recompensed for my exertions. Gaiety gave place to a rational conversation. Captain Flint talked of America, and my spirits settled into composure; but I have been too busy to-day for sleep, and you have to read my nightly labours. It is now the hour when the disturbed spirits are recalled home. I will obey the voice of chanticleer, and go to bed. Sleeping or waking, I shall ever be your affectionate,

RACHEL COWLEY.

NOTE TO THE READER.

FINDING nothing important to my history during the course of several weeks' correspondence, so punctually maintained by Miss Cowley, I have suppressed a few letters, to avoid the censure of prolixity.

Amongst the causes assigned in her letters at this time for her dejection of mind, she mentions the absence of her friends from the Abbey, who, it appears, were on an excursion to Hartley-Pool, a bathing-place not very remote from them. She dwells, however, with much more inquietude on the condition of Miss Howard. She observes, that her uncle's absence has still more lessened these observances of civility which Miss Flint had practised. Her indignation daily augments, by perceiving Lady Maclairn's increasing reserve on the subject of Miss

Howard's unworthy treatment.—“ To what purpose serve her downcast eyes and varying colour,” writes Miss Cowley, “ when at table she hears Miss Flint tell the servant, that *Mary's* plate needs no change? The very footman blushes. Why does she not insist on every one's equality at her table? Surely, Lucy, the Gospel does not recommend with the spirit of peace, an insensibility to oppression ! It is, however, too much for me to witness ; and I am determined to have some conversation with Captain Flint when he returns. Something shall be done to mitigate this poor girl's sufferings. I suspect she dares not complain to her uncle. I will do it for her, and trust to the event. I disdain that humanity which shrinks from active service, and can quiet its feelings by exalting its sighs in *useless pity* and *fretful censures*.”—“ But,” adds she, renewing her wonted spirit, “ I am called to or-

der. My dear Mrs. Allen is sounding in my ears her direful predictions in regard to girls who love scribbling better than sleep, and sentiment better than roast beef. As pale faces bring up the rear of the evils she has mustered to frighten me, I will be docile, though to tell you the truth, her brow of tender solicitude has subdued me. How often have I drawn on her treasures of health ! how often has she relinquished repose in order to watch over my infant wailings, and sickly frowardness ! Never shall a care reach that bosom on which my head has rested, if I can prevent it ! So I will go to bed. What an age it is since you have had letters from Horace ! Ah ! Lucy, you must pity Rachel Cowley, for she is discontented with herself, though always
your

RACHEL COWLEY.

CHAP VII.

A Letter dated in October, and addressed to Miss Hardcastle, is fortunately recovered, and the thread of the narrative, which I found was broken, is by that means preserved. Trusting that my readers are by this time satisfied that Miss Cowley can tell her own story; and are convinced that no labours of mine could better tell it, I cheerfully resume my humble office of copyist.

LETTER XI.

From Miss Cowley to Miss Hardcastle.

I send you, my dear Lucy, with my thanks to Counsellor Steadman for his

letter, one which I have received from Mr. Flamall. You will find that I have an enormous account to settle with him on the score of *gratitude*; for the kind-hearted gentleman, not having yet smoothed the way for my *sweetheart's* appearance, has sent a double portion of *sweetmeats*, and withal, many compliments on my *sweet* and gentle temper, which, it appears, fame has celebrated in the island of Jamaica. I would divide with you this tribute of praise, were it not the first my unparalleled gentleness and patience ever received; but I will be generous notwithstanding: and as we have here as many preserved limes, &c. as would satisfy the cravings of half the boarding-school misses in London, I have desired all mine may be sent to Heathcot: you will dispose of them in due measure to your neighbours. My friends and neighbours returned to the Abbey last night. To-morrow I shall pass the day at Mrs.

Heartley's, when I shall give her the counsellor's letter. I do most seriously assure you, that my late indisposition has disappeared. Your accounts from Italy were the specifics for the worst part of it; and without detracting from the good effects of the new curricule, I must attribute my cure to your prescription. Lady Maclairn's anxiety has not been less than yours, my dear Lucy, on the subject of medical advice; but I knew the medicine I wanted—it was not in the apothecary's shop. The curricule is, however, still in favour, for it amuses Sir Murdock, and he is proud of being charioteer. You cannot imagine with what tenderness and attention I am treated by Lady Maclairn. I cannot help loving her; but I wish also to reverence her. It hurts me to see her sink herself and her talents, in order to sooth and keep quiet a woman who might be taught to respect her. She never offends

or disappoints me but when I see her forget Lady Maclairn, and act the part of a mere cringing dependent. I find she has by dint of coaxing and tears, obtained permission for Mary to go with us to the Abbey to-morrow, in order to see her uncle. Mrs. Warner, Miss Flint's favourite servant, communicated these glad tidings to Mrs. Allen, and concluded by saying, "Aye, they will never understand my lady's temper. Miss Howard should have gone without asking leave, and Lady Maclairn should have commended her for taking it for granted she had a right to go to see the captain. Miss Flint is not the better for being indulged in her temper. I do my duty; she knows I am faithful, but she knows also that I will not be her slave. It often vexes me to see Miss Howard so much afraid of her! Why not say from the very first, 'I will go and see my uncle, Madam.' Instead of this, there are plead-

ings and tears, which have gained after all, only leave to stay a few minutes with the captain. As to Lady Maclairn, there is something to say. The golden-calf will have its worshippers still; so she must bend the knee: but poor Mary has no such hopes, and she is a simpleton not to shew more spirit."—This woman is well-intentioned to Miss Howard, and, I believe, contributes to her comforts; for she asked Mrs. Allen to lend her Evelina to read to Mary whilst she worked. She usually sits with her in a little parlour appropriated to Warner: Miss Flint preferring being alone in her *lair*. I shall not finish this letter till I have seen my friends at the farm, having to write to Mr. Steadman.

Saturday Evening, Nine O'clock.

Not chusing to part with the serenity I have brought home with me, I hav

left my friends in the parlour in order to finish the day happily with you. Perhaps there was also a little discretion at the bottom of this intention when first suggested. I wished to avoid Mary's first greeting from her aunt, whose orders she had disobeyed; but on inquiry, the lady had retired for the night before we reached the hall. Miss Flint's sleeping draught is sometimes potent, I suspect; and Mrs. Patty, our maid, never fails to say on these sudden drowsy fits, "Ah, poor lady, she is much to be pitied! for there is nothing like the sleep God sends." Leaving, however, Miss Lucretia to enjoy any repose she can purchase, I will prepare for mine by an hour's chit-chat with my Lucy. We sallied forth this morning for our visit to the Abbey. Never did summer bequeath to her boisterous brother October a more delicious one! Mary was of the party;

but she was not in spirits. Jonathan, Miss Flint's footman, followed our steps. I had my project in my head; for I had determined that this exertion of Miss Flint's power should not pass unnoticed. We had not proceeded more than half our road to the Abbey, before we were met by the captain and the Heartleys. Mary's philosophy forsook her on perceiving them. "How unpardonable I am," said she, "now I have no pretence for going farther with you! I must return with the servant." You may conclude that this observation was conveyed to the captain's ear. He coloured, and with some quickness in his manner turned to the servant, saying, "You need go no farther. I shall take care of Miss Howard." The man bowed, and retreating, seemed yet to hesitate. "Inform your lady, Sir," added the captain with dignity, "that my niece passes the day with me and her *friends*, and that I shall call

on her soon." Jonathan, with a lower bow, quickened his pace.

"Indeed! indeed!" cried Mary, "I must not disobey orders, my aunt will be disoblighd!"—"I will be answerable for that," replied the captain with gravity; "but in your attention to your *aunt*, Mary, do not forget your *uncle*, nor what is due to yourself." It was some time before this little cloud passed; but it was dissipated by the time we reached the farm, and Mary's welcome from Mrs. Wilson apparently banished Miss Flint and her *orders* from her thoughts.

I do not remember mentioning to you the noble apartments which Mrs. Heartley occupies in the Abbey. But her taste has given to them an appearance of comfort, light, and cheerfulness, which in my opinion more than supplies the absence of the magnificence, which gave the finish to dark and richly carved wain-

scoting and bow windows, half glazed with painted glass. A good selection of books, in handsome glass-cases, gay chintz furniture, and an excellent musical instrument, assuredly suited better the assembled party, and are much more congenial with the love of neatness and order of the present inmates of the house. But should it happen that any of the departed spirits of the "Ingram" race still hover near the spot of their glory, they must, if they be placable, acknowledge, that although cumbrous greatness is fallen, hospitality still retains her empire in the house; and that those vices which ruined themselves and half the county, are buried in the fallen fabric of Gothic ignorance and superstition. After dinner we had music, which at least vied with the lute and virginal of former times. The Heartleys, I find, are all gifted with a taste for harmony. The mother is an excellent performer on the

harpsichord; and her daughter shews that skill in the science so necessary in the teacher, to produce a pupil like Alice. Mary was pressed for a song. "I have forgotten all I know for want of practice," said she with a suppressed sigh. "I will sing with you, my love," replied Mrs. Heartley, "and we shall manage very well." She was encouraged, and timidly sung the little ballad of Prior's, "In vain you tell your panting lover," with taste and expression. "Bravo, my sweet Mary," observed Mrs. Heartley with a smile, "you have not forgotten that song at least. You would recover in a month all you have lost." Elated by this commendation, she turned towards me, and with eagerness observed, that Henry Heartley had taught her not only to sing that song, but to admire the poetry and composition; "for," added she, "Henry was an Orpheus, even in his cradle! I have heard Mrs. Heartley

say, that she used to quiet him when a baby, by playing upon the piano forte. How happy we used to be when he was here!" Mrs. Wilson's calling her away prevented Mary from proceeding on a subject which seemed to have placed her heart on her lips.

I forgot not to deliver the counsellor's letter to his old favourite; Mrs. Heartley ran it over with apparent satisfaction, and give it me to peruse. "I will thank him myself," said she, "for this proof of his remembrance; I needed none of his candour and justice. He knew me before I was a wife, he knew me as one, and he *knows* that Heartley's widow lives to honour his memory, and to perpetuate his virtues in his children." She pressed my hand with emotion, and smiling through the tears which escaped her, observed that she was yet selfish and weak.

I will not say that we became noisy

after tea, but it is certain that we were childishly gay. The delighted Mrs. Wilson, followed by the young people, made the circuit of her domains. The dairy, the cheese-chamber, the poultry-yard were explored, and poor Malcolm was left a while in captivity in the pig-stye, for his daring crime of attempting to give Alice a green gown. By means of that secret intelligence at which you so wickedly laugh, Mrs. Wilson and myself were old friends in half an hour. She found out that Miss Cowley was not a fine lady; and Miss Cowley discovered that the farmer's wife was worth all the fine ladies that have ever swarmed as butterflies of the hour. She brought to my mind the very image of the good woman before Rhadamanthus, and I doubt not but she could as satisfactorily demand his passport; for though she has not a daughter to produce as a notable housewife, yet she has made as many cheeses

as her counterpart, and will trace as numerous a progeny to bless her memory.

She seconded my motion for the family to walk home with us, and it was agreed to, with certain limitations as to the time and extent of our demands; which were forgotten by each in their turn.

At length we set out on our return home; a cloudless sky, and a full-orbed moon not only favoured us, but there was a serenity in the air which is seldom found in so advanced a season, and which seemed to favour the still lingering leaf as it trembled on its parent stem. There is something in a calm autumnal evening which so resembles the closing in of a well-spent life, that it naturally leads the mind to contemplation, nay, to a *pensive-ness*, though not melancholy, which “loves not noisy folly.” Our gay spirits yielded to the influence of the objects

around us. We sauntered, rather than walked, and insensibly the party separated, and our chat was broken into several divisions. Mrs. Heartley and myself, with the captain, had even lost sight of our company, which had advanced before us. Mr. Flint with enthusiasm supported the opinion of a plurality of worlds; and I sung a verse of Addison's sublime hymn.—“The spacious firmament on high.” My companions partook with me in the pious fervour of the poet; and we moved so slowly, that had not the sound of an horse's feet accelerated our steps, the traveller might have thought us statues, or ghosts. An angle in the road was in our path, and on turning it, Mr. Snughead appeared. He paid his compliments to me with a familiarity which even startled me. “This is fortunate!” cried he, stopping his horse and endeavouring to dismount, “now my incredulity is corrected! for will you

credit me, when I tell you that in listening to the seraphic strains you sung, I said,

“ Can any mortal mixture of earth’s mould
Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment?”

But I am convinced, and you must sing again.” I instantly concluded that Mr. Snughead had not dined *en famille*: retreating therefore from his impatient horse, I observed with good humour, that it did not appear that his horse had heard of the convention—“ no song, no supper,” and was not disposed to loiter on his road. “ I am already too late,” added I, “ but at your next visit at the hall, I will sing.” This prudence on my part was rewarded; he recollected himself, bowed to the captain, and wishing me good night, spurred his horse.

Poor Miss Howard on losing sight of

her uncle, felt all her terrors return. "What would her aunt say to her? and what was she to say to her aunt? She would not believe her." Mrs. Allen engaged to stand as witness; and Malcolm encouraged her by saying, "My mother will plead your cause, never fear." But I verily believe the poor girl felt it, as a respite from violence when Warner told her that Miss Flint was asleep.

Mrs. Allen sends her blessing, and your Rachel Cowley remains your affectionate Sister and Friend.

LETTER XII.

Rachel Cowley to Miss Hardcastle.

You will, my dear Lucy, when you have read this letter, commend me for my caution. "I am well, and all here are well, thank God for it!" Do not how-

ever fancy that I have not had an escape, although the curricule has not been over-set, nor have I had a cold and sore throat in consequence of my night walk.

In my last I mentioned that poor Mary had suffered from being out so late; but that her aunt wisely recollecting that Sunday was the captain's visiting day, graciously admitted Mrs. Allen's evidence in favour of the poor culprit; and that our Sabbath was a day of peace as well as rest. I heard nothing of colds or rheums that day.—On Monday, Mary was kept hard at work upon the odious carpet. I rode out with Sir Murdock in the morning of the following day, and on our return found your dear letter. All was peace, in consequence, in your Rachel's bosom. But at dinner no counterfeiting could conceal from me the disorder which Lady Maclairn took such pains to hide. It is incredible to conceive, what a command of features

this woman has acquired! But I detest her when she dares not speak with frankness. There is a tremulous play of the muscles round her mouth, and a slowness in her utterance that mark the struggle within. On enquiring for Miss Flint and Mary, who did not appear, we were told that Miss Flint had a most oppressive nervous head-ach, and that Miss Howard had gotten a sore throat.—On Wednesday, both the invalids were worse; for the aunt was uneasy on Mary's account who was feverish. "Sir Murdock was, however, to be amused." He might fancy it would turn to a putrid sore throat and be alarmed. It is a pity, thought I, whilst Lady Maclairn made all these excuses for imposition, that nature had not given you a different complexion! I was certain, Lucy, that there was some mystery in this business. Warner kept close, and Mrs. Patty said that Miss Howard kept her bed. I do not love mischief; there-

fore, to amuse my good baronet, who appeared somewhat discomfited by the sudden change in the weather, and his lady's frequent desertion of him in order to attend the sick, I engaged him to settle us in our winter quarters, and to make shelves for the books lately sent me from town. Two days incessant rain were thus passed; and we learned that the valetudinarians were recovering.—On Sunday, Mrs. Allen and myself went to church in the morning; and I was requested to say to Captain Flint, that Mary had been indisposed with a *cold*.” “He will find her altered,” added her ladyship with one of her unlucky blushes; “she has been very ill.” I asked her whether there had been any appearance of danger in the case. “No,” replied she, “but her aunt has been much distressed on her account. They mean to dine below to-day, lest the captain should be uneasy.”

I delivered my commission with the same precaution it was given me, and whilst I was satisfying Mary's friends on the subject, Mr. Snughead passed me with a supercilious bow, without taking off his hat. On entering the parlour we found it heated by a large fire; it was really suffocating. Miss Flint, huddled up in wrappers, had taken possession of the great chair on one side of it. Mary, with a face as pale as death, in a close morning cap, a muslin cravat, and a shawl closely pinned up, had her appointed station on the other side. Her cheek glowed however on seeing us; but she appeared fluttered and weak. Our congratulations followed, whilst the captain looking with much seriousness at her, said, "My dear child, why was I not informed of your being ill?—" "It was only a cold, Sir," answered Mary with a faint blush. "And a cold she has to thank you for," said the sister. "Night

walks in October do not suit Mary. It is well it was no worse, I expected only a putrid fever." The servants, for we are old fashioned people on a Sunday, had by this time covered the table; and a smoaking sirloin graced the bottom of it. Mary rose from her seat in visible disorder, oppressed, as I thought, by the heat of the room, and the savoury steams of the dinner; but as she tottered to the door, she burst into hysterical sobbings, and Malcolm and myself prevented her falling, for she fainted in our arms. Malcolm placed her in a chair in the vestibule. All was hurry and alarm. Whilst others were searching for remedies, and her uncle was supporting her head, I hazarded to open the door into the garden, observing that the air was mild, and would restore her. It evidently was useful, for she gave signs of returning consciousness, but again relapsed. "Take off that cravat," said I,

“and let her have more air. I opened the sash, which was nearer to her than the door. Whilst giving this direction, the captain obeyed. Judge of our sensations! Her throat was black and bruised by a violent grasp, and her bosom lacerated by what appeared to be the strokes of a cane or horse-whip. “God of Heaven and of earth!” groaned out the captain, “what means all this? To what am I doomed!”—“My dear captain,” said the almost breathless Lady Maclairn, who now approached with some remedy, “have patience, all shall be explained. Your sister has been to blame; she is sensible of it: she bitterly repents of her violence: she has suffered, severely suffered for it; all will still be well, only have patience.” He heeded her not, but with a look of horror and apparent calmness, he surveyed for some moments the marks of the outrage which had been committed; then wrapping the

shawl round the still insensible girl, he attempted to raise her in his arms; but they refused the office. Miss Flint now ventured to open the door, to order the servants to be summoned, and to carry Mary upstairs, loudly reprehending us for exposing her to the air. "Shame to thy sex, begone!" cried the captain with fury. "Urge me not, thou barbarian! But art thou not here to exult over thy victim?" He again drew off the shawl. "This is Howard's child, Lucretia!" continued he, "this is thy sister's orphan!" A heavy sigh from Mary drew his attention again; he attempted to raise her; but his limbs trembled to that degree, that he was forced to desist. The prompt, the ever-succouring Allen gave Malcolm a sign. He took Mary in his arms, and carried her to my room, followed by Mrs. Allen. The captain was on the point of doing so likewise, when Miss Lucretia darting towards him, and

catching his coat, exclaimed, “ You *shall* hear me ! She provoked me.”— No language can convey to you, Lucy, the expression with which he replied. “ Yes ! I doubt it not ! So did her hapless virtuous mother ! so did her noble-minded father ! ” He paused, and raising his eyes to Heaven, moved his lips as though in silent ejaculation. “ No,” said he in a solemn tone of voice, “ I will not curse her ! But,” added he, “ *God*, Lucretia, will call you to answer for this deed ! ” “ Hear me ! only hear me ! ” screamed she. “ I only punished her *insolence*. I will justify myself ! ”— “ Never canst thou do *that*,” replied he, “ where humanity resides.” He broke from her and turned into the garden. A violent fit succeeded to Miss Flint’s efforts ; the servants with difficulty conveyed her, in her struggles, to her apartment, from whence even I heard her screams. On entering my room, I found Miss Howard laid on the

bed, and much recovered though weeping. "What confusion! what mischief have I occasioned!" said she addressing me. "Who was it, my dear Miss Cowley, who took off my things? Was it not my uncle? How unfortunate that I could not get up stairs!"—"Say not so," observed the soothing Mrs. Allen, "but rather, my dear child, be thankful to Providence who has thus seasonably checked your aunt's violence; such a temper required it." Mr. Flint entered the room. no longer was his face gloomy, and his eyes sparkling with rage. He was pale and languid, and sitting down by his niece, he shed tears like an infant. "The coach is preparing," said he at length, "can you make the effort my child? I leave not this accursed house without you."—"I am much better, I am able to go any where with you," replied the poor girl; "but my dear, dear uncle! leave not my aunt in displeasure; indeed she

is very sorry for what has passed, indeed I had entirely forgiven her.”—“ Name her not,” answered the captain with emotion; “ go to your parents’ grave; see her work *there!* Remember the protection she promised you! But I will be just,” continued he, suppressing his rising passions, “ to my credulity, to my easy faith, you must attribute these scourges. But who,” continued he, turning to us, “ could have conceived that any hand could have inflicted such cruelty on a creature like *this*, and that hand a sister’s! But we will depart, my child, to that home where your bruises will be healed, and I shall be justly reprov’d for the pride and ambition which caused them. Your asylum is secure, and you will have bread and peace.”

My hitherto restrained tears now flowed abundantly : it was well for me they did, for the throbbing in my temples was excruciating. I attempted to speak ; but I

could only say with extreme emotion, "Dismiss your fears for her, her happiness shall be my care." A look was the thanks I received. The coach drew up, and Malcolm entered the room. Whilst Mrs. Allen prepared Mary, he said in a whisper, "I leave my father to you. Miss Flint is in strong convulsions, the doctor is sent for, and my mother is dreadfully alarmed." He carried Mary to the carriage, and accompanied her and the captain to the Abbey.

Mrs. Allen went to assist Lady Mac-lairn, and I to perform a duty which was become pressing, for I had not seen Sir Murdock from the first signal of alarm. I recollected this circumstance with a sensation of terror undefinable at this moment; and quickening my steps, met a servant whom I believe I frightened by my eagerness, for in reply to my question, he said, with some hesitation of manner, that he had seen Sir Murdock go into

the garden, and, if I pleased, he would go with me to look for him. I saw the conclusion he had drawn, and therefore, with collected ease, replied that I should soon meet him.

For sometime, however, the object of my search eluded me; at last I perceived him sitting in a nook so concealed, that it serves the gardener for his rollers, &c. He resembled a statue rather than a living creature; and was so lost in thought, that he neither heard my steps nor saw me when I stood before him. He was speaking, however, and I heard him say, "Are there no remedies? Is she dead? Will not Heaven spare her? Destruction must have monsters for its work!"—I took his hand and he started. "I come to seek you," said I, in a cheerful tone; "Miss Howard is recovered, and gone home with her uncle. I want you to give me some coffee." He looked at me.—"Angel of peace!" said he, in a low

voice, "art thou still near me?"—I again spoke. "Your daughter, your adopted daughter, my dear Sir Murdock, is near you," observed I, "but you do not heed her. It is cold here, and she begs you to enter the house." I gently took him by the arm; he again started as from a dream.—"My dear Miss Cowley," said he, rising, "is it you that I see here!"—I repeated my entreaties, and he instantly took the way to the house and inquired whether Miss Howard had seen his wife before she left the hall. "Lady Mac-lairn has been with Miss Flint," replied I, "who is ill; but we shall all rejoice at the events of this day when more composed. Mary Howard shall never want the protection of her aunt."—"Your purpose is worthy of you, Miss Cowley," replied the baronet, with collected dignity and energy, "and in your intentions of goodness, as these relate to this injured girl, your path is not only easy

but pleasant. But what can you do or say for Sir Murdock Maclairn and his wife, under whose ostensible roof innocence has been oppressed and ill-used? My supposed infirmity of mind,—would to God it were only supposition!—may screen me from ignominy with the charitable. But can generosity or candour find an apology for my wife? Will it not be said, and with truth, that she was a daily witness of the improper treatment which Miss Howard received from her aunt? Will it not be said, that she knew of the outrage committed recently; and that, in order to spare the offender, she concealed it from the poor suffering girl's friends? Will censure stop here? Oh, no! it will be alledged that lady Maclairn encouraged this woman in her cruelty!"—"The most confirmed rancour would refuse to credit such a tale of Lady Maclairn, if told," answered I, with seriousness. "There is not a menial

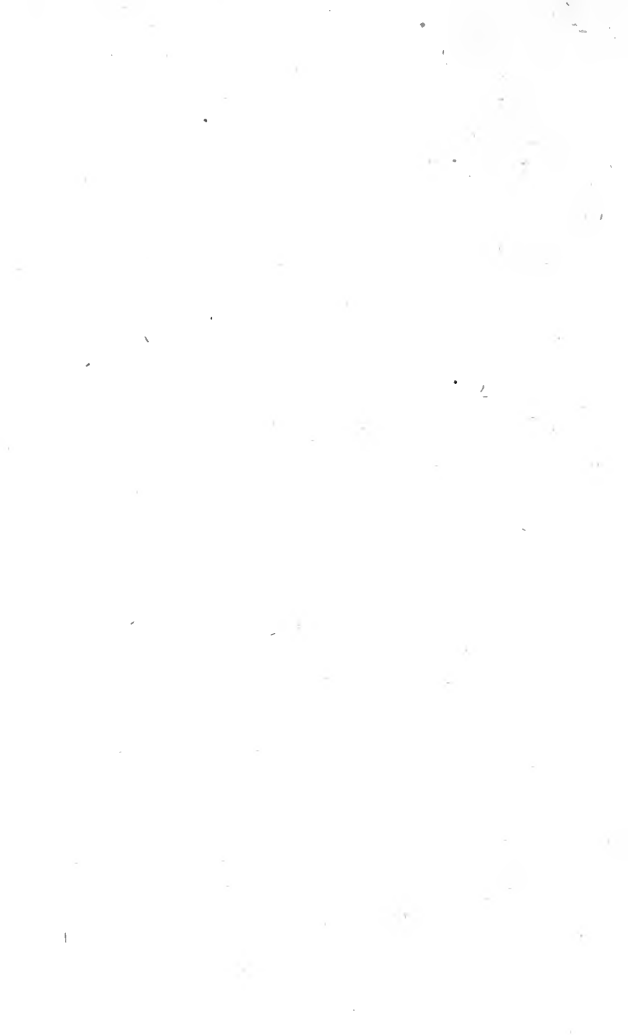
in her family would not refute it, and bear witness to her gentleness and humanity. Every one has seen her unremitting attentions to Miss Howard's comfort, and her endeavours to render her aunt kinder to her. She trusted that Mary's assiduities would, in time, soften down the asperities of Miss Flint's temper. She knew that her interference would be liable to misconstructions; and though she has suffered but little less than Miss Howard, since her residence here, yet she has not dared to oppose her remaining, lest it should be thought that she feared her influence might be unfriendly to her son's interest. I have seen Lady Maclairn's difficulties from the first hour of my being here," continued I, "I have seen her miserable on this poor girl's account; and I am certain she was a stranger to the treatment she has lately undergone."—"You plead to a partial hearer," answered he, deeply sighing; "I know that to my Harriot

a scene of such violence would have been death. But is it not incomprehensible to you how such a mind as her's should have retained for this woman an affection so determined and so constant? Why does she persist in living with her? Why subject herself to mortifications and degradations to please her caprice?"—"Lady Maclairn is human;" replied I, with a smile, "she is a mother, and a tender mother; and she may, with justice, expect that her son Philip will be benefited by these sacrifices of her care. Besides these motives, there are others more exalted, which prompt her zeal. What would this woman have been? What would she be without Lady Maclairn? To whom is she indebted for the little humanity which she does shew?"—The baronet appeared silently to acquiesce in my sentiments; but I found he was again withdrawn into his own mind. I, however, found it not difficult to rouse him; for on my observing that

poor Lady Maclairn would be anxious for his safety in so chilling an air, he quickened his steps. His wife was indeed anxious! She burst into tears on seeing him, and the interesting Sir Murdock seemed to have no care but that of soothing her distress. "You must listen to Miss Cowley, my Harriot," said he, "she will teach you to rejoice at the captive's deliverance."—"I could and should rejoice," answered she, "that poor Mary is freed from the hardest of all servitudes, did I not see Lucretia so struck with a sense of her fault and disgrace as to be in danger of her life. She is an unhappy woman," added she, with emotion, "and I cannot help pitying her." No reply was made. Mrs. Allen now entered with the coffee, and I found by her report, that in getting Miss Flint to her room, the servants, unable to hold her in her struggles, had let her slip from their arms, and she had hurt her knee very much; she was, however, asleep;

the doctor had seen her, and the servants had got a respite. Mary was composed and much better. I retired to my room, and continued to solace my mind by viewing this day of Mary's emancipation as a happy event. I really considered the horse-whipping part of the business with the stoical indifference of a mail-coach driver, when I contrasted it with the good effects it was likely to produce. In a week Mary may forget the discipline, and all will be well; but I sincerely wish it may lead Miss Flint to consider whether it might not turn to good account to scourge *herself*. Moderate flagellation would neither hurt her temper of body or mind.—But lest you should be induced to think unfavourably of my tender mercies, I shall conclude this letter; and you will, I trust, give the kiss of peace to your

RACHEL COWLEY.





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